

103
WESTERN
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WUDANGSHAN • IN TUJIA COUNTRY • SHENNONG BOATMEN • NEEDLEWORK

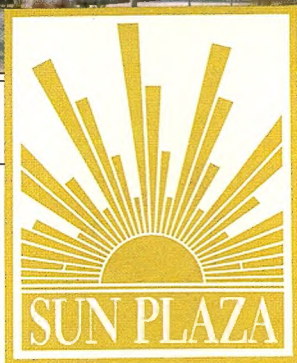


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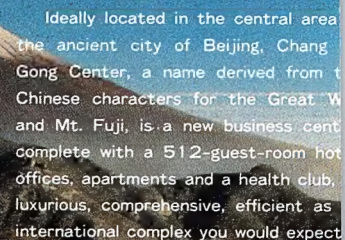
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EDITORIAL

Realm of Myths and Mysteries

After our last two issues on China's Grand Canal it is time to return to less-travelled byways. Our special destination this month is western Hubei — a rugged region of mountains and valleys bisected by the River Yangtse which has only very recently been opened up to foreign travellers. Nevertheless, and despite its apparent isolation, it has been the target of Chinese pilgrims for many hundreds of years. Their destination? Wudangshan!

These misty mountains proved the ideal retreat for Taoists bent on following *dao* (the way) from around the seventh century onwards. The construction of Taoist temples and other religious buildings flourished under the devout Emperor Taizu of the Ming (reign dates 1368-1398). However, many of those making a 'pilgrimage' to Mount Wudang these days have rather a different goal in mind. They are seeking to deepen their knowledge of the school of martial arts founded by Taoist adepts — Wudang boxing — from which stem disciplines such as the popular *taijiquan* (shadow-boxing) and certain *qigong* (breathing) practices. The supposed founder of Wudang boxing, the Ming-dynasty priest Zhang Sanfeng, makes an appearance in our Cartoons column this month.

During the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.) most of this region was held by the State of Ba, which had its capital at Chongqing in Sichuan. Relics of the Ba tribe include the 'hanging' coffins which can still be seen *in situ* in, for instance, some of the side gorges of the Yangtse. Our reporter visited the gorges of the River Shennong, but was somewhat taken aback when his boatmen stripped off completely in their battle against the rapids!

The Ba still live on today in their direct descendants, the Tujia. With a history of more than 3,000 years and an exceptionally strong cultural tradition, the Tujia people are now mainly concentrated in southwestern Hubei.

This issue also takes a look at the complexities of one of China's ever-popular entertainments — Beijing opera, which only really developed in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) — as well as painted ceramic wares of the Neolithic Yangshao Culture which lasted from around 5,000 to 3,000 B.C. Other features take us from the southern coast of Guangdong to the northwest and Qinghai, where we witness Tibetan Buddhist rituals at the time of the Spring Festival (Lunar New Year).

On which topical note may we wish you the very best of health, prosperity and happiness for the coming Year of the Snake!



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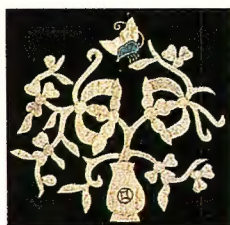
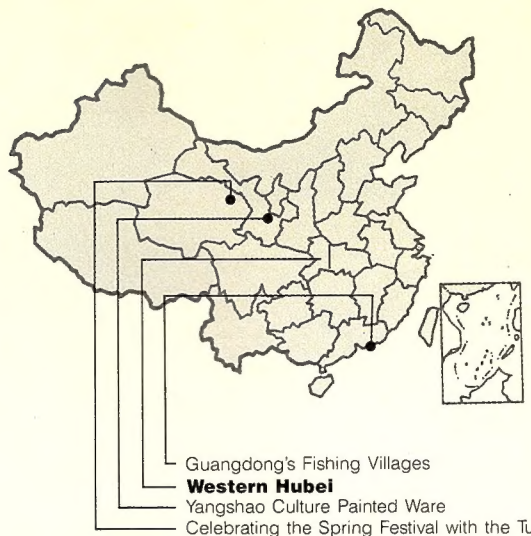
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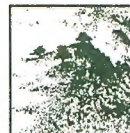


Wudangshan — Taoist



A world wreathed in mists and mysteries (2), where Taoist adepts (1) have retreated for hundreds of years to live according to their precepts (both by Wong Chung Fai).





Wonderland

ARTICLE BY JUN FENG



Stretching for four hundred kilometres across the northwestern tip of Hubei Province, Wudangshan (the Wudang Mountains) southwest of Junxian are known as a preserve of Taoism. In the past, Taoists of great renown chose this lovely mountain region as a retreat in which to live according to their principles. Wudangshan's seventy-two peaks — the highest, Tianzhu (Pillar of Heaven) on Mount Wudang rising to 1,612 metres — therefore shelter many magnificent temples and other religious buildings. This was also the cradle of a famous school of martial arts, Wudang boxing, one of its best-known offshoots being *taijiquan* (shadow boxing). Most interesting for the visitor is Mount Wudang itself, accessible from Junxian (Danjiang), to which there are trains from the provincial capital, Wuhan.

Idyllic Taoist Setting

Historical records reveal that construction of temples on the mountain started in the early seventh century under the Tang dynasty, with additions in Song and Yuan times, reaching a climax under the founder of the Ming dynasty, Emperor Taizu (reign dates 1368-1398). A most faithful



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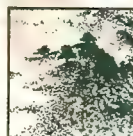
The Golden Hall on Tianzhu Peak is wonder enough (3), but Wudangshan has more: gilt dragon and sleeping prince (2) (2 and 3 by Pan Bingyuan), bronze figurines (1), and gigantic stele-bearing tortoise (4) (last two by Wu Zhijian).



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disciple of Taoism, the emperor employed over 300,000 labourers to erect a mammoth network of eight palaces or halls, two temples, thirty-six convents, seventy-two cliff shrines, thirty-nine bridges and twelve pavilions. These buildings were all renovated or expanded over a two-year period around 1552, and most of them are still in good condition today.

Taoism itself is an ancient school of thought indigenous to China which became an official religion during the Eastern Han dynasty some time between 126 and 144. The philosophies on which it is based, however, go back very much further. Traditionally, Taoism looks upon Laozi as its founder. Some sources believe that Laozi was a purely legendary figure, others maintain that he was a historical person, a contemporary of Confucius born in around 604 B.C., and author of the *Daodejing* (Canon of the Way and Its Virtue).

In the latter, *dao* (the way) — a very ancient Chinese concept — is presented as the origin of all things and all beings in the universe, the cosmic principle inherent in all human existence and all of nature's activities. This innermost tenet of Taoism concerns natural balance and harmony. To follow *dao* is to resolve all contradictions and distractions of human experience and thought. Such a state cannot be achieved by rational analysis, only through a sort of mystic intuition. *Wuwei* (non-doing or non-interference) became the rule for those living in accordance with

dao; the ideal was a life of perfect simplicity, harmony with nature and complete freedom from all desires and strivings.

This was the pure, cerebral form of Taoism, but at the same time there existed a popular Taoism which incorporated many elements of sorcery and the occult, including trance states and a preoccupation with life after death involving rites to appease the spirits of the dead and a search for immortality. Taoists of this type used many means to try and cheat death, including dabbings in alchemy to try and produce pills or an elixir which would grant immortality, regimens to 'nourish the vital principle' — special diets, sexual practices, gymnastic and breathing exercises (which is where *taijiquan* comes into the picture) — and so on. Over the centuries, Taoism took on certain aspects of Buddhism and at the same time influenced the development of Buddhist practices in China, particularly the Chan sect (better known in the West by its Japanese equivalent, Zen).

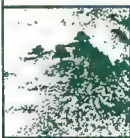
Bird's-Eye View from the Inn at the Top

Mi Fu (1051-1107), a great Song-dynasty painter and calligrapher, spoke highly of Mount Wudang, which he called Diyishan (No. One Mountain). These three characters are now engraved in powerful strokes on a huge stone tablet standing beside the Yuanhe (Primary Harmony) Temple at the foot of the mountain. Xu Xiake (1586-1641), the well-known Ming-dynasty traveller and geographer, also described the whole range in favourable terms: 'There is a chain of lovely hills, and the landscape there suggests both singularity and serenity in seclusion.'

The car I was in drove right to the end of the road near one of the main temples — the Zixiao (Purple Clouds) Temple on Zhanqi Peak. This famous temple complex, built in 1413, boasts magnificent architecture worthy



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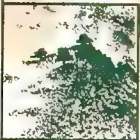
Treasures from Wudangshan: mythical figures adorn the roof-ridge at Golden Hall (1), Ming-dynasty wooden statue at Huangjing Hall (2), Ming-dynasty bronze on Jinding (4), and an enamelled tablet (5) and delicate dragon (3) now in Wuhan Provincial Museum (all by Pan Bingyuan).



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of a palace and a total of 860 rooms. I found its crimson outer walls and green-tiled roofs most eye-catching against the backdrop of the ancient trees. Taoism refers to such outer walls as the 'Taoist fence'.

It is a long climb, around ten kilometres, to the main summit. I started my ascent about noon and did not reach Jinding (Golden Top) until dusk. This name is derived from the wondrous Jindian (Golden Hall), perched on the very tip of Tianzhu Peak, which can be seen for over fifty kilometres.

Once at the top, I checked in at the Jinding Inn, actually just a rough wooden cabin; the room I stayed in contained four single beds — and that was all. I pushed the window open to find that the inn was built right on the edge of a precipice. An unfathomable abyss fell away below my eyes. The damp, fresh air seeping into the room also brought with it a feeling of mountain wildness. On the opposite peak I could just make out several human figures, now hidden, now emerging from the drifting mists into the light of the setting sun. As the dusk deepened, the silhouettes gradually vanished into the encroaching night....

To Golden Hall at Dawn

I was awakened in the small hours by my fellow-lodgers trooping out of the room, flashlights in hand. I too got up and went out. It had rained in the night and the slippery, wet mountain path made me feel the chill in the air all the more keenly.

After walking for about seven or eight minutes, we came to a Taoist temple named Huangjing (Divine Scriptures) Hall, from where we began the climb up the Jiuliandeng (Nine Consecutive) Flights. The steps, 120 to a flight, are so very steep that you have to move up one step at a time, holding tight to the iron chain alongside, your nose close to the heels of the person in front. After one flight, the sun came up and my eyes were filled with the stupendous sight of the Golden Hall.

This structure, of the most exquisite workmanship and well-preserved, is truly a national treasure. Of burnished, gilded copper, 5.5 metres high, 5.8 metres wide and 4.2 metres deep, it gleamed resplendent under the dawn sun. The ridges of the roof, like those of the Forbidden City in Beijing and other major imperial buildings, are adorned with bronze figurines depicting strange, mythical creatures in rows. The biggest at the back is the *chi*, a kind of horned dragon which, as it is supposed to be an aquatic animal, is mounted on the roof to protect the structure from fire. The other figures include a lion, a phoenix, a *qilin* (a type of unicorn), and horse-like beasts.

Visitors are not permitted to enter the sacred Ming-dynasty building, which dates from 1416. Pilgrims who wish to burn joss sticks or pick a bamboo slip for divination must do so outside. The temple contains five bronze gilt statues, the major one Zhenwu, a Taoist deity portrayed with flowing hair, who is supposed to have practised martial arts with a magic sword in the mountains for forty-two years.

Taoist Treasures

Wudangshan used to be a treasure-house of cultural and religious relics. But as a result of vandalism over many years the Taoist temples at the foot of the mountains are very dilapidated. Fortunately, not all is lost. The Nanyan (South Crag) Palace on the cliff of the same name on Mount Wudang was carved from the rock in the style of a wooden structure in 1314 during the Yuan dynasty. Enshrined inside the temple are dozens of cast bronze statues, including Yuanshi Tianzun, the supreme Taoist deity.

I was particularly impressed by a wooden carving, originally gilt, of



3



Religious complexes such as the Zixiao (Purple Clouds) Temple (1, by Xie Lixing) shelter the Taoist community, men and women, old and young (4, also by Xie Lixing, and 5, by Wu Zhijian). Everyday chores persist (3), but the sensation of being on top of the world must bring its own reward (2) (last two by Wong Chung Fat).



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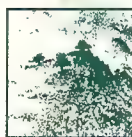


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Taoists at practice (1, by Sun Yongcai, and 2, by Wong Chung Fai). The mountain's fame draws students from far and near (5) and has made it the site of martial arts contests (6) (5 and 6 by Sun Yongcai). Zhang Sanfeng, founder of Wudang boxing (3, by Pan Bingyuan), and early-morning swordplay on Jinding (4, by Xie Lixing).



4



a coiled dragon which was set in a niche on the left-hand side of the temple. This fierce creature, all fangs and claws, nevertheless serves as a pillow for a youth who sleeps artlessly, his head against its flank. This carving apparently commemorates a legendary prince who refused to succeed to the throne. Instead, he went looking for someone to teach him *dao* in the hope of achieving immortality. On reaching Wudangshan, he became the disciple of a Taoist adept, learning martial arts and cultivating himself according to Taoist precepts until he finally joined the happy and illustrious ranks of the immortals.

Imperial Connections

Another story concerns the Guituobei (Stele Carried by a Tortoise) at the foot of Mount Wudang. Weighing several tons, the stele was carved from a single gigantic slab of stone; engraved on it is an edict of the Ming emperor Yongle (reign dates 1403-1424). This emperor, whose given name was Zhudi, was earlier enfeoffed as the Prince of Yan. In 1399 he staged an armed revolt against the court, but was defeated by the ruling emperor, Jianwen. Fleeing in confusion, he came to a great river across his way. With troops close at his heels, Zhudi sighed at the sky in despair, at which a giant tortoise emerged from the turbulent river and carried him safely to the far shore.

Zhudi later won many victories in succession, conquering the entire country and proclaiming himself emperor. After he had rewarded his subordinates according to their deserts, he was reminded about the tortoise by his military counsellor. By now there were no more official positions vacant, so the emperor said: 'The tortoise once saved my life and merits the highest reward. Let it have the job of carrying my imperial edict.'

Compared with this massive stele, the enamelled 'Sacred Tablet of the God in Heaven' found at Wudangshan (now in the custody of the Provincial Museum in Wuhan) is delicate work. But the dragon and phoenix — symbols for emperor and empress — carved on the surround likewise suggest the full dignity of the imperial court. The Provincial Museum also contains a tiny gold dragon which was only recently excavated on Wudangshan. With its lovely, flowing lines, it is so beautifully executed that one can only marvel at the craftsmanship of artisans of the past.

Haven for Martial Arts

Like many other sites of religious activity set in China's mountains, Wudangshan is a famous centre of martial arts. Chinese martial arts can

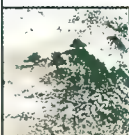
be divided into two main schools, northern and southern. Representative of the first is Shaolin boxing, originating at the Buddhist Shaolin Monastery in Henan; it emphasizes beauty of form and physical strength and is therefore also known as the 'outer school'. Wudang boxing of the southern school was founded on Wudangshan; it stresses internal cultivation and is consequently known as the 'inner school'.

The founder of Wudang boxing is said to have been a Ming-dynasty Taoist priest by the name of Zhang Sanfeng. A bronze statue of the Grand Master can be seen in the museum at the foot of Mount Wudang. There is a charming story about how Zhang got the inspiration for his style. One day, we are told, he heard a magpie chattering away angrily in his courtyard. Peering out, he saw a magpie in a tree and a snake on the ground below, both glaring at each other. Every time the magpie flew down to attack the snake, the latter would swing its head and twist its body to evade the pecks. Thus, through long observation of the animals which were his neighbours on the mountain — primarily the snake, tortoise, deer and crane (all also, incidentally, symbols of longevity) — Zhang worked out a system of defeating an attacker through the use of evasive tactics.

But there is more to it than the purely practical defensive aspects. Another — possibly more convincing — story tells how, to combat the



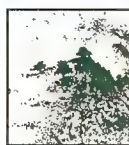
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problem of stiffness brought on by long hours of meditation, Zhang developed a series of movements combining breathing techniques with natural body movements conforming to the Taoist principle of *wuwei* — in other words, non-forced, relaxed, free-flowing, slow and smooth.

Taijiquan

Taijiquan certainly lays much stress on health benefits, particularly in the long term. Good health is essential in achieving longevity, the next best thing after immortality. As, traditionally, illness and disease were thought to be caused by an imbalance of the *yin* and *yang* elements, physical and mental equilibrium could be maintained by encouraging the circulation of *qi*, the invisible energy force, around and within the body. This also fitted in with deeper Taoist beliefs, whereby the body was seen as being governed by the same forces that ruled nature. By putting the body into overall harmony, one could achieve harmony with nature and the universe.

Taijiquan is the best known of the Wudang martial arts. But many other styles and techniques are derived from Wudang boxing, including *bagua* (Eight Trigrams) style, *taiji* spear, broadsword, knife and cudgel routines, and various other types of swordplay. Wudang martial arts also include sundry *qigong* (breathing) exercises requiring concentration and respiratory control. Originally aimed at promoting general good health, *qigong* is currently experiencing an astonishing upsurge in popularity all over China and beyond.

Practitioners and fans of Wudang boxing still come to its source in streams. I met a top-notch exponent of *taijiquan* from Hong Kong who had come all this way to study under two Wudang masters. I also saw Japanese women who had come to improve their technique. It is nothing





uncommon to see people practising their particular *wushu* (martial arts) discipline on the mountain slopes, alone or in twos and threes, in the early morning. The Taoist priests and nuns on the mountain, some of them still going strong at over eighty, practise every day as part of their spiritual and physical development, and their pupils are found all over China.

The Wudang school enjoys a high prestige in martial arts circles. Wudangshan's first *Wushu* Invitation Tournament, held at the end of last year, attracted masters from all over the country to vie for the championship.

The Pilgrims' Path

Besides those who come to study martial arts, countless pilgrims flock to Wudangshan to show their religious devotion, many from the neighbouring provinces of Shaanxi and Henan.

Carrying dragon streamers and multi-coloured flags and burning incense, the groups of pilgrims chant loudly as they climb the mountain. This familiar sight has a legend behind it. Once upon a time, it is said, there used to be a wicked dragon living at the foot of Mount Wudang which wreaked havoc, devouring many a human. The local people in great distress decided to climb the mountain to invoke the assistance of the deity Zhenwu, enshrined at Jinding. So as not to arouse the dragon's suspicions, they disguised themselves as pilgrims and wound up the mountain with much noise and waving of banners to cover their real motive. Since then, all pilgrims have adopted the same procedure.

At Nanyan Palace you often see long queues of pilgrims awaiting their turn to draw water from the Honey Dew Well in the courtyard. Apart from quenching their thirst after the climb, their purpose is to show their sincerity and call down blessings — all part of the pilgrimage ritual.

At nightfall, most pilgrims stay in one of several inns at Jinding. After the evening meal, the open space there becomes an open-air cinema. People drag out stools and sit around to watch. Unfortunately, the heavy fog common in the evening obliterates the screen before long, and people disperse — grumbling — for the night. Most of the inns have communal dormitories for pilgrims, where they sleep on long beds, packed tightly side by side, the men and women separately. Still, although these dormitories are crowded, a sleeping space is very inexpensive, and it certainly keeps you warm!

Some come to improve their taijiquan (1), others to seek a master (3) (both by Wong Chung Fai). Pilgrims come in streams: queueing for blessed water at Nanyan Palace (2, by Pan Bingyuan), clambering up the steep, narrow steps (4 and 6, both by Wong Chung Fai), and crowding the dormitories (5, by Wu Zhijian).



Every morning before breakfast the Taoist priests and nuns conduct a service lasting about an hour. The same thing happens in the evening after dinner. Together with the pilgrims, I listened to their chanting of the *Daodejing*, the Taoist canon, musical and pleasant to the ear, although I confess I could understand little of its content.

As a further demonstration of their devotion, many pilgrims risk their lives to burn incense outside the Nanyan Palace. There is a rock there carved into the shape of a dragon's head which juts out from the cliff for about 1.6 metres. The 'Dragon-Head Incense Burner' is perched right at the tip of the head over the abyss. This head is said to be most responsive to prayer and so many people insist on climbing out there regardless of their personal safety. It has happened in the past that pilgrims were overcome by dizziness and fell into the void. To prevent such fatal accidents, pilgrims are now warned not to climb on to the dragon's head.

Precipices Lined with Stalls

The religious aura of the mountain does not in any way mean that there is no mercantile activity there. Near the parking lot there are shops with binoculars, cameras, mountaineering boots, umbrellas and walking sticks for rent. There is also a place where people can leave things in safe keeping while they are on the mountain. I had brought along my own binoculars and camera. But the shoes I wore were not fit for the ascent, so I left them there and rented a pair of heavy-duty boots.

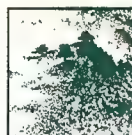
Beyond the Liumei Temple, I found one small shop after another by steps paved with black stone. Most of these shops are suspended in mid-air. As the cliff walls are very steep and the path is winding, with little space for buildings, the shop owners simply build platforms with wooden



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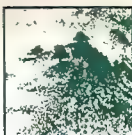
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boards propped up on poles. These platforms are partitioned with cardboard painted a light blue and roofed over.

The articles on sale at these shops included handicrafts and gadgets such as a walking stick with a handle in the shape of a dragon's head which incorporates a flashlight. I fell for a small gilt wooden model of the Golden Hall, executed with superb craftsmanship. On my desk now I also have a few rocks I picked up on Wudangshan, some golden, some silvery, to be found everywhere.

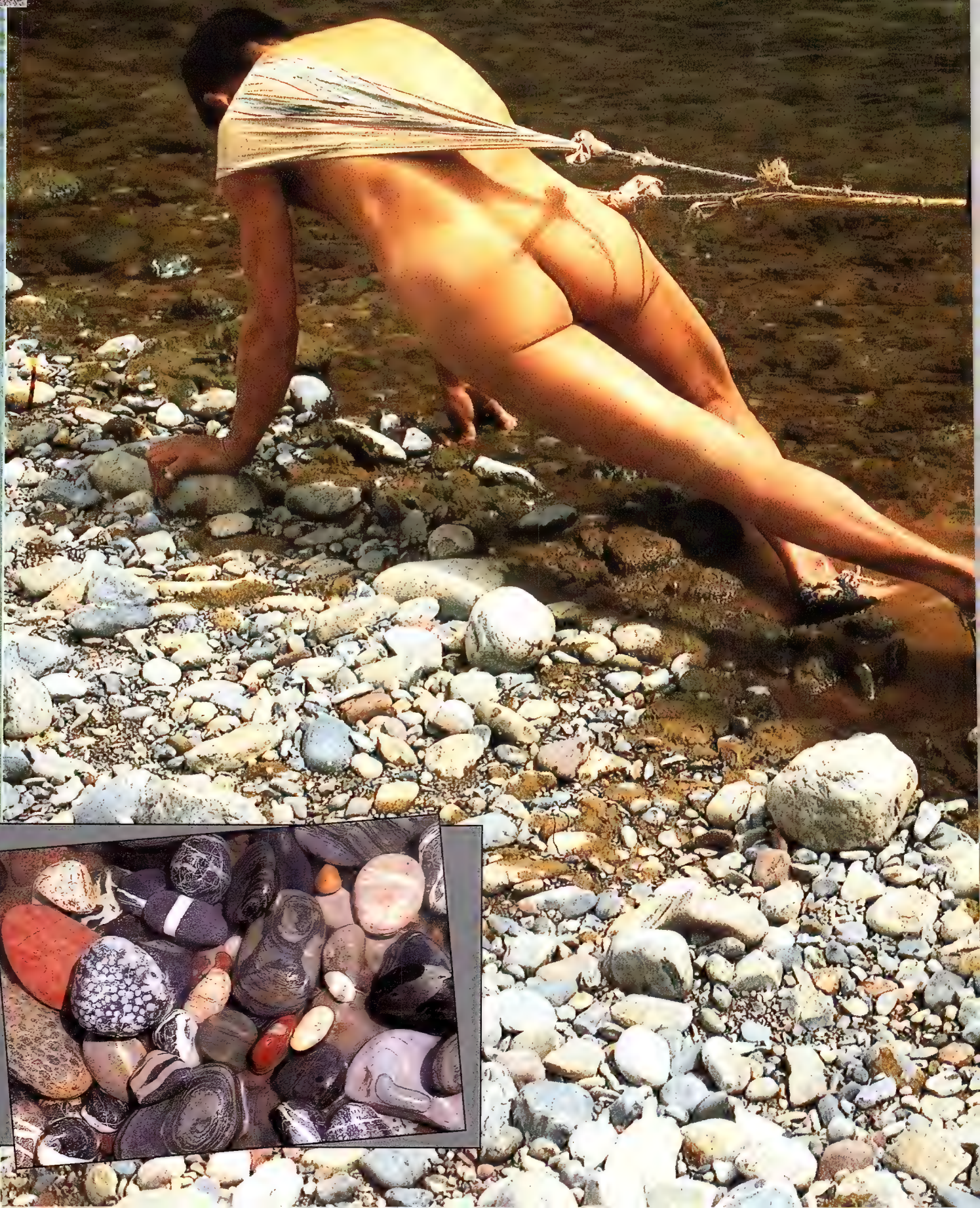
But these small shops are not the only ones. Even Taoist priests and nuns, while still observing their daily routine of gathering firewood, fetching water, washing their clothes and cleaning out the halls, have gone into business. Although they live on the mountain, they are by no means cut off from the outside world. Since the place swarms with tourists, how can they resist the lure of gaining a stake in the tourist trade? At Jinding itself, Taoist adepts sell statues of Zhenwu to tourists, incense and candles to pilgrims, as well as Taoist books and souvenirs.

Translated by Ren Jiazhen



The tranquillity of Golden Hall at dawn (2, by Wu Zhijian) contrasts with the heady thrill of sacrificing at the 'Dragon-Head Incense Burner' at Nanyan Palace (5, by Sun Yongcai). Souvenirs of Wudangshan: Golden Hall in miniature (1) and glittering rocks (4) (both by Wong Chung Fai); mementoes from a Taoist-run stall (3, by Sun Yongcai).





WESTERN HUBEI

Song of the Shennong Boatmen

PHOTOS & TEXT BY WONG CHUNG FAI







We arrive at Xirangkou, the mouth of the River Shennong.... It is early morning, but we have already come nine kilometres upstream along the River Yangtse from Badong, a small riverside county town in western Hubei. Shrouded in the mist, dozens of small boats wait here to take clients up the Shennong. This river rises sixty kilometres to the north on the southern slopes of Mount Shennongjia, 3,053 metres high and a wild and enigmatic place famous for reported sightings of a strange apeman-like creature. On its turbulent descent to join the Yangtse, the River Shennong flows through picturesque gorges, the most easily accessible the seventeen-kilometre stretch upriver from Xirangkou.

After some haggling over the fare, we board a craft and set off. Almost immediately the shallow river narrows and cliffs rise forbiddingly on either side. As they bend into their harness and warm to their work of hauling the boat against the current using long towropes of plaited bamboo, the trackers surprise us by removing their trousers and shorts. The boatman at the helm explains that they prefer to work completely unencumbered below the waist as wet garments hinder their movements. 'Besides,' he adds, 'in a remote place such as this, who cares what they wear or don't wear!' The water is so clear that we can see the multi-coloured pebbles on the bottom. I fish one out; it is spotted with white, a coral fossil four hundred million years old. Strange to think that this place was once at the bottom of the sea.

Shallow though the river is, there are many treacherous eddies. Bending low, the trackers on the bank press forward, towropes taut. They start a wordless song, 'Ho, hai, ho....' The sonorous, hearty chant — which helps them coordinate their efforts and keeps them cheerful — echoes through the desolate gorge. After hauling the boat through several rapids, the trackers are out of breath and covered with sweat. They strip right off, revealing their muscular bodies, their bronzed skin gleaming in the sun.

To the sound of the trackers' simple song our boat slowly enters Yanguan (Grotto Coffin) Gorge in the middle reaches. Cliffs rise sharply on either side and high up on their rocky surface we spot coffins here and there in crevices. Why and how the Ba, the ancestors of the Tujia people, disposed of their dead in this manner is a mystery to this day.

As our boat continues, we seem at times to be heading straight for some large rock that bars our passage only to find it behind us a moment later, such are the twists and turns. Going against the current proves hard indeed. Very often, apart from the trackers straining away at the front, another boatman has to jump out of the boat and push it from behind. Sometimes, when the path disappears or the river is too deep, the trackers have no choice but to climb over rocks, make their way through shrubs and thorns, or scabble in the shallows for purchase on the pebbly bottom. Occasionally heavily laden boats pass us in the other direction, descending the river so fast that their boatmen have to hang back on the towropes from behind to slow their progress and stop them from being swept away.

Towards the end of the afternoon we emerge into a wide, placid stretch where lush mountains are mirrored in the water on either side. Now that the boat can be handled easily with bamboo poles, the trackers lose no time in jumping back on board for a rest. Only now do I notice their sandals made from strips of cloth, the effect rather like rope-soled espadrilles. Footwear like this not only protects the feet against the sharp stones, it also gives a good grip.

As we draw near the upper reaches of the gorge, we find our way blocked by huge rocks; there is nothing to do but turn back, letting ourselves be taken by the current. The boat, like an unbridled horse, dashes at breathtaking speed down the river, but the boatmen remain calm as, deftly handling their bamboo poles, they dodge all the hazards ahead. The boat seems to skip over the pebbles. A thrilling experience! In less than two hours we are back safe and sound in Xirangkou, our starting point.

Translated by Qian Weifan





2

In Tujia Country

PHOTOS BY WONG CHUNG FAI
ARTICLE BY HU YUE

The mountainous areas in the southwest of Hubei Province are bordered by northwestern Hunan and eastern Sichuan. The Rivers Qingjiang, Youshui and Yujiang meander through this region in which lives a people called the Tujia, almost three million strong and with a history reaching back over thousands of years.

Descendants of a Powerful Tribe

The Tujia are descendants of the ancient Ba. According to historical records, five rival tribes once inhabited this part of China, the Ba, Fan, Xiang, Tan and Zheng. The Ba tribe, whose totem was the white tiger, grew quickly and was able to establish a firm foothold. During the eleventh century B.C., that is, some three thousand years ago, the Ba tribe was accorded the status of vassal state by an emperor of the Zhou dynasty.

By the time of the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.) the State of Ba had become extremely powerful. It had expanded its territorial holdings by swallowing up more than forty small principalities and had set up its capital at Chongqing, then called Yuzhou, in present-day Sichuan. But when, in 316 B.C., it was in its turn wiped out by the State of Qin (which went on to unify China for the first time under the Qin dynasty from 221-207 B.C.), the Ba people scattered throughout the mountainous areas of what are now Hunan, Hubei, Sichuan and Guizhou. They called themselves *bizika* (native people). After the Song dynasty (420-479) they became known as the Tumin people. Not until 1949 did they formally receive the name Tujia.

Today the Tujia people are mainly concentrated in the western parts of Hunan and Hubei; the West Hubei Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture was established in 1983.



3

Terraces bright with yellow rape (1). Little is left of Tangya but the inscription over the gateway (2) and the Tusi's tomb (3).



1



2



3



'Local Emperor'

Our long-distance bus rocked and swayed along the winding road through the mountains as we travelled to Xianfeng County, site of some of the most important historical relics of the Tujia. The terraced hills were bright with patches of yellow rape in an all-pervasive spring atmosphere.

After the Mongols came to power as the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) they inaugurated the Tusi system in the regions of southwestern China inhabited by minority peoples. Under this system, hereditary headmen were appointed as local rulers by the imperial court, an arrangement that lasted until 1735 when the Qing emperor Yongzheng sent his own officials to replace the Tusi. Though just the ruler of a circumscribed area, the Tusi was all-powerful over his people, which is why he was also sometimes referred to as a 'local emperor'. As a sign of his power, a Tusi could build his own town, which then became his administrative centre. The ruins of such a town, Tangya, are proof of this system. The first Tangya Tusi is said to have been a man named Tan Qi, whose family retained the title for eighteen generations — a period of over 460 years — into Qing times.

Tangya lies thirty kilometres northwest of Xianfeng. According to the records, it was built in the seventeenth century during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) at the foot of Mount Xianwu by the side of the River Tangya, a location corresponding to Tujia ideas about geomancy. In its heyday the town covered three hundred acres and housed government offices, barracks, drill grounds and so on. All that is left today are a few streets paved with flagstones and a section of crumbling wall of rammed earth and stones. Over the gateway there is a stone tablet inscribed with four characters meaning 'Powerful Town of Jingnan'. (Jingnan, in ancient times, was the name given to a region covering southwestern Hubei, northwestern Hunan and eastern Sichuan.)

More evocative is the Tusi's tomb which can be reached by a twenty-minute walk along a small path up the hill. The tomb of black stone, ten metres wide and four metres high, is divided into three parts: front, centre and back. The front section contains three chambers, in front of each of which there is a stone stele devoid of any inscription. Apparently, although they had their own language — similar to Yi — of the Tibeto-Burman branch, the Tujia had no written language. It was only from 1604 onwards, when



Shemihu's ancestral hall (5) is the venue for the local Arm-Swinging Dance (1). The land near Lichuan — a patchwork of colour (2). Oiled tea in a typical Tujia stilt-house (3); another Tujia household boasts antique carved panelling (4, by Wu Zhijian).

a Tusi invited some Han Chinese to start a school locally, that the Tujia started to use Chinese characters. Nevertheless, one tall stele in front of the tomb is most expressive. It depicts a cheerful-looking funeral dance, a continuing Tujia custom which we were able to see in action later on during our visit.

Sheba — Arm-Swinging Dance

Although we had only been in western Hubei for a couple of days, we were eager to get to a village where we might have the chance to see the Tujia Arm-Swinging Dance, known as *sheba* in the local language. According to research this dance, or complex of dances, dates from the mid-eleventh century. It is still performed with gusto on all important occasions: the Spring Festival (Lunar New Year), harvest celebrations, sacrificial rites, the Ox King Festival and many others.



Intricate decorations on a Tujia dwelling (1) and carved beams and taiji motif on an ancestral hall in Laifeng County (3) (both by Wu Zhijian). The old water-mill in Badong (2) and nearby adobe granaries (4).



The day we arrived in the village of Shemihu in Hedong, Laifeng County, happened to be the eighth day of the fourth month of the lunar calendar, which is also the Ox King Festival. This is a time to honour cows and oxen and their role in the community. They are given a day's holiday and treated to special fodder, including some of the cakes and glutinous rice prepared for their owners.

The ancestral hall in front of which the dancing was to take place was simple in structure and obviously very ancient. I noticed that the interior of the hall was bare except for three portraits on the walls of men said to be the forefathers of the three major Tujia families.

Many of the villagers had gathered in front of the hall, sitting on the steps or leaning against the walls. In the centre of the open space a huge drum and gong were set up on wooden frames. To start the proceedings, a young man began beating the instruments repeatedly, ushering in the



3



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dancers, who arranged themselves in lines with the oldest — the leaders — at the front and youngsters in their early teens at the rear. The relentless rhythm of the drum, now intense, now subdued, echoed through the normally quiet village. The performers, who seemed well-trained, danced round the drum, their movements symbolic of sweeping the floor, sowing seeds, harvesting, making rice cakes, hunting wild animals... They were in fact depicting the way of life of their ancestors. Though they must have performed the dance a thousand times already, they seemed sincere and solemn in their portrayal.

There are actually many local and seasonal variations to the dance, and many levels of performance: from gigantic affairs involving ten thousand participants and lasting for up to seven days to small local dances like this





4

one. Arm-Swinging Dances are also classified as 'single' or 'double'. In the first, the dancers move one after another sideways in a circle. In the latter, where they are in two circles, they turn to face each other. In any event, their movements — bending their knees and swinging their arms as they move to the left or right — are vigorous and rhythmic, unleashing a strong rustic ... even primitive ... atmosphere.

Tujia Architectural Traditions

During our visit to western Hubei, we saw many different types of Tujia architecture, perhaps the most typical being the stilt-house. These wooden buildings, the upper storey resting on long stilts, meet all the practical needs of Tujia life. For instance, the ground floor, the open space below the actual house, is used for keeping domestic animals and as a store-room. To enter the main living quarters you climb a flight of ten or more steps.

In Badong we discovered an old stilt-house which incorporated an equally ancient water-mill. As there is not much water in the area, the flow was weak, and the water-mill not very efficient. Not far away there were two eye-catching structures by the side of a path. These were granaries, made of thick adobe. The villagers told us that the temperature in summer can be as much as 40°C, while in winter it may fall to 20°C below freezing, with frequent heavy snow. With such a range of temperatures, the local people build these granaries to protect their grain stocks.

While travelling between Lichuan and Xianfeng we stopped off to visit a couple of Tujia families, one of whom lived in a brick house. Its roof had upturned eaves carved with beautiful pictures as well as sculptures of mysterious animals supposed to be able to keep away evil spirits. However, the best example of Tujia architecture we saw was an ancestral temple in Laifeng County. Its ceiling was adorned with an enormous *taiji* (the symbol of the Absolute, divided into dark and light, *yin* and *yang*, complementary opposites), trigrams and other patterns. The beams were carved and painted to narrate a story in a mysterious yet harmonious manner.



5

Steamed buns for occasions both happy and sad (1, by Wu Zhijian). After the all-night funeral dance (3, by Tian Dejian), the coffin is borne solemnly to the burial ground (2, by Xi Zuming). An elder's privilege (4, by Yang Jieqing) and cloth shoes for the future in-laws (5, by Yang Fangyue).



Dancing for a Funeral

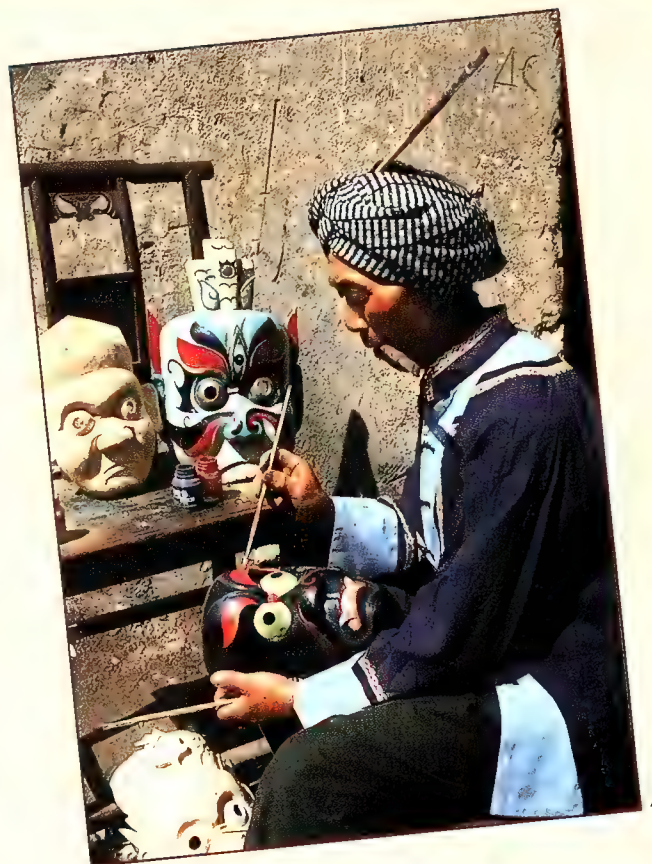
While we were in Xianfeng, we heard that there was to be a funeral in a nearby village. On our way there the following day we met a Tujia man in his thirties. At the entrance to the village he set off some firecrackers at which an old man — presumably a relative of the deceased — came out of the memorial hall and offered us tea and cigarettes.

We entered the hall. The black coffin stood in the centre with, on one side, a huge drum covered with ox-hide and, on the other, two bronze gongs and other implements. The hall was packed with mourners who had come to pay their last respects when, all of a sudden, the silence was broken by the sound of drums and gongs. Two elderly Tujia men wearing white tunics (white is the colour of mourning in China) and black trousers emerged from the crowd and began dancing a rustic measure, chanting roughly all the while. As I learnt later, it is considered a neighbour's duty to dance through the night for the deceased, and the lively scene also seems to ease the sorrow of the bereaved.

The actual burial took place the following day. We joined the long procession which escorted the coffin to the tomb site, accompanied by the mournful sounds of the *suona* (horn). An unusual part of the ceremony was the young man who rode on the coffin, apparently to prevent the deceased from being attacked by evil spirits.

It is strange the way some traditions survive while others die out completely over the passage of time. For instance, in the past, a bride would be required to cry for one or two days before her wedding. Some would even cry for a fortnight, ably accompanied by mother and sisters. The girls of today find it difficult to produce tears on such occasions and instead make a gift of cloth shoes to their future parents-in-law. In this way, I was told, the bride can also demonstrate her sewing and needlework talents.

However, many other old customs have stood the test of time and are still faithfully observed. One very ancient Tujia tradition calls for the old





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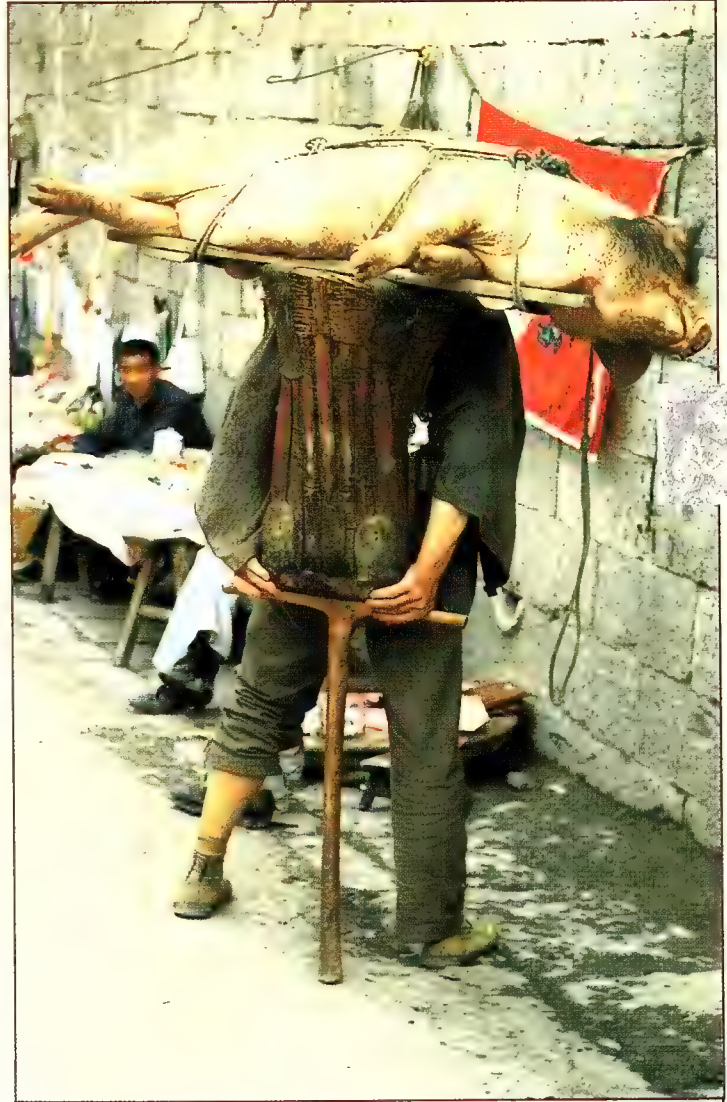
men to drink their rice wine in a special way, sucking it up through a sort of straw, at the Spring Festival and other occasions. This is a difficult and time-consuming method and of course you cannot take a good, deep draught, but that's the custom! So why do they still do it? Apparently, it is connected with their privileged status as elders. The old people drink first, and they drink in this manner. The young show their respect for their elders by waiting patiently until they have drunk their fill.

The Irreplaceable Bamboo Basket

Nowadays, with the construction of ever more roads, motorcycles are gaining in popularity, especially with the younger generation. Nevertheless, people still tend to ride around with a bamboo basket on their back. One can say without exaggeration that the basket is irreplaceable for the simple reason that roads do not yet extend to all the villages. If you need to carry dozens of kilos of goods up a steep hill path, a motorcycle is no help at all. But this is when the traditional bamboo carrier, carefully woven and finished, shaped to the curve of the back and fitted with good strong handles or carry-loops, comes into its own. And when you need to take a breather, it is not necessary to take off the heavy basket; you simply rest the load on a specially shaped stick for a few minutes.

These hills of western Hubei also produce good tea, especially the counties of Hefeng and Wufeng, which is probably why the Tujia are so fond of 'oiled tea'. This local speciality is simple to make: some tea-leaves and millet grains are fried in oil, then boiling water is added. The result is rather like thin gruel. I tried some while I was in Xianfeng and found it quite refreshing, with a mild, sweetish taste. The tea from western Hubei known as 'Yihong' enjoys a good reputation among connoisseurs. At the height of the picking season, local families drop everything else and patiently sift through tray after tray of tea-leaves, separating the good from the bad to ensure the quality of the final product.

Translated by Wang Mingjie



5

Hefeng womenfolk grading tea (1, by Yang Fangyue). A Tujia craftsman making masks for the ancient nuo dance drama (2) and amusing cloth monkeys for sale (4, by Wu Zhijian). Bamboo baskets: the modern approach (3, by Huang Keqin) and the staunchly traditional (5).

Needlework as a Demonstration

PHOTOS BY WU ZHIJIAN
TEXT BY TIAN CUI



*Embroidered and appliquéd from
head to toe (by Guo Baiyuan)*



*An exquisite collar, part of the
traditional costume for the
bride*



*Examples of appliqué work on
babies' bibs*

of Motherly Love



Appliquéd waistcoat rich in symbolism

During festivals or other celebrations the streets and lanes of western Hubei are enlivened by swarms of children in colourful and carefully finished clothes. Encrusted with ornamental needlework, the garments — chest-warmers, bibs, two-piece suits, waistcoats, tunics, hats and cloth shoes — are the individual creations of the children's mothers.

Butie (appliqué work) and embroidery are highly popular among Han folk in western Hubei. By the age of twelve or thirteen, village girls have already mastered the skills of embroidery ... hence the saying: 'There is no girl who cannot embroider.' They also learn at an early age how to make skilful use of fabric cuttings to produce appliqué work.

For important occasions, a lot of work with the needle is expected. For their weddings, for example, the local girls usually wear delicate collars finely embroidered with auspicious symbols for their future happiness — dragon and phoenix, cassia sprays, peonies, etc. — generally in gold, silver and red. Such a collar is made up of partially overlapping petal-like pieces of satin, with ribbons at the ends from which hang small silver bells; these tinkle melodiously as the bride moves, adding to the atmosphere of festive gaiety.

According to traditional custom, the bride keeps the bits of fabric left over from making her trousseau, hoarding them in what is known as a 'waste-cloth bag' which she takes with her to her husband's home. When she becomes pregnant, she uses these remnants to make baby-clothes. As the child grows, her fabric store will produce a series of nappies, bibs, wrappers, even — at a later date — school bags. In order to produce the tiny details needed to complete the effect, she resorts to embroidery to portray eyes, eyebrows, mouths, noses, hair and fur, often producing an almost three-dimensional effect.

One of the pictures shows a child's circular bib with a lotus flower and two roosters; all sections are outlined in couched gold thread. The lotus stamens and the roosters' eyes are embroidered in silk, and the



Ornamental circular bib



The zhuazhou ceremony



Flamboyant design for a child's hat



Chest-warmer with appliquéd animal motifs

feathers on the roosters' necks are rendered in a sort of long stitch. The young boy shown wears an appliquéd waistcoat, while his lower body and legs are kept warm with a superbly embroidered apron-like wrapper (in which he was enveloped completely as a tiny baby). His soft shoes are also appliquéd and embroidered. All in all, he provides a walking demonstration of his mother's needlework skills. Another example here, the fanciful hat, is embroidered with butterflies and flowers, but it also has a three-dimensional montage of a bird emerging from its nest in a lotus flower!

On a baby's first birthday, relatives and well-wishers gather, bringing a great number of gifts: all sorts of hats, cloth shoes and articles of clothing which are invariably either appliquéd or embroidered. On that day, after the baby has been dressed up in its very best, the guests witness the ceremony known as *zhuazhou*. The baby is allowed to select freely from among a variety of objects such as books, pens, an abacus, toys, shoes and jewellery, a practice thought to give clues to his or her later progress and direction in life.

In their needlework mothers obviously focus on auspicious motifs such as the dragon, phoenix, *qilin* (a sort of unicorn), deer and tiger to call down marital blessings, good fortune, courage and a long life for their children. With their artistic eye, they even manage to turn out a variety of designs on the same theme. One appliquéd waistcoat shown here features a scaly *qilin* ridden by a child while a phoenix hovers overhead. One can also identify birds, flowers, butterflies, the swastika-like symbol meaning immortality and long life ... even a teapot, signifying a wish for fertility. The child's face is clearly delineated and the phoenix is made up of bold, contrasting blocks of

colour.

Sometimes the needlewoman lets herself be inspired by the functional shape of some garment or article. For example, a baby's bib generally has a round hole for the neck. A village mother might think of the hole as a cat's body and place a vivid cat's head in the middle of the bib with the front paws stretching out, while the tail and hind legs appear at the bottom in a somewhat surrealistic manner. This free, imaginative approach is what characterizes the appliquéd work of this region.

Some designs revolve around fantastic creatures, ugly but lovable, intended to protect the baby from mischievous monsters and evil spirits across whose path it might stray. Animals are also represented as stuffed toys, often themselves minor works of art. With padded noses, paws and eyes, lovingly detailed (note the extravagant fringing for the lion's mane!), these too are auspicious beasts to defend the precious baby from all evil.

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Translated by Gu Weizhou



Stuffed toys — cat, lion and tiger

HUBEI SLATE

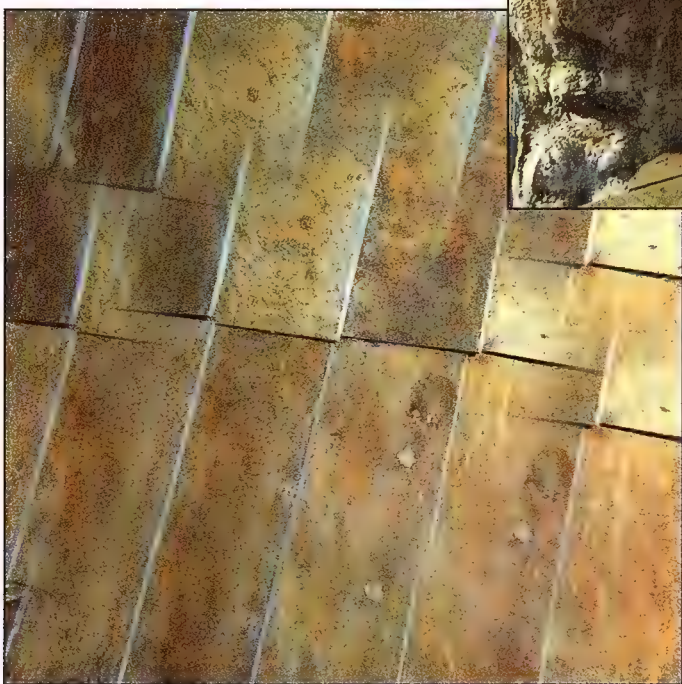
Slate paving is gradually taking the place of cement as a result of its greater decorative potential. Hubei slate meets all aesthetic and practical requirements.

Most of the mountainous areas in the northwest of Hubei Province are composed of ancient sedimentary rocks and are extremely rich in slate resources. The local slate has been exploited and utilized for over 500 years.

The mineral composition of the slate includes quartz, hydromica, sericite and kaolinite. The slate features excellent chemical stability, resistance to acids and alkalis and anti-corrosion properties. It also possesses the physical properties of compression and expansion resistance and it is weather-proof as well as a heat insulator.



Veranda paved with Hubei slate (S1204)



Sawn slabs (Metric system)	Hand-cut slabs (Metric system)	Packing	Article no.	Colour
10×20×0.6 — 1.5cm	10×20×0.4 — 1.2cm	In wooden crates	S1202	Green
15×30×0.6 — 1.5cm	15×30×0.4 — 1.2cm		S1203	Light grey
20×30×0.6 — 1.5cm	20×30×0.4 — 1.2cm		S1204	Reddish brown
30×30×0.6 — 1.5cm	30×30×0.4 — 1.2cm		S1205	Black
40×20×0.6 — 1.5cm	40×20×0.4 — 1.2cm		S1209	Dark green
40×25×0.6 — 1.5cm	40×25×0.4 — 1.2cm		S1229	Dark grey
40×30×0.6 — 1.5cm	40×30×0.4 — 1.2cm		S1260	Light yellow
40×60×1.0 — 2.0cm	40×60×1.0 — 2.0cm		S1261	Pitch black
50×50×1.0 — 2.0cm	50×50×1.0 — 2.0cm			
60×60×1.0 — 2.0cm	60×60×1.0 — 2.0cm			

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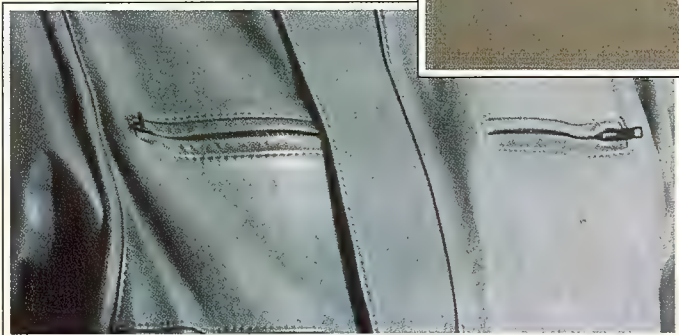
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Unspoilt Charm: Guangdong's Fishing Villages

ARTICLE BY TIAN CUI





Many of the fishing villages along the Guangdong coast have preserved their traditional architecture (1, by Sun Zening). The women working on sails on the beach near Haifeng demonstrate their married status with their hairstyle (2, by Zhao Bin).



Guangdong in the south of China is often considered one of the richest and most dynamic of all China's provinces, partly due to its enterprising capital, Guangzhou, and its special economic zones. This is generally the first stop for tourists entering China from Hong Kong but, apart from the obligatory visit to Guangzhou and its surroundings, Foshan in particular, many visitors hardly pause there. A few may explore the Zhujiang (Pearl River) delta, while others may head east to the Shantou-Chaozhou area on the River Hanhe, cradle of the famous Chiu Chow cuisine. But Guangdong has a lot more to offer. It remains an essentially rural province with an immense seaboard where innumerable fishing villages nestle in often idyllic surroundings. This certainly describes Guangdong's eastern coast between Shenzhen and Shantou. More than two hundred kilometres — as the crow flies — of peninsulas, creeks, rocky promontories and golden sands, of fishing villages where junks of all sizes can still be seen and where hardy inhabitants keep to many of their traditional ways.

Located more or less halfway between the two special economic zones of Shenzhen and Shantou in Shantou Prefecture are the counties of Haifeng and Lufeng. Here fishing reigns supreme. These charming regions are relatively easy of access, especially from Shenzhen, from where a bus will take you to Haifeng in a little under five hours.

On the Shore

I boarded a bus in Shenzhen at ten in the morning and reached Haifeng at three in the afternoon. I was immediately surrounded by motorcycle 'taxis'. These accommodate passengers either on sidecars or on the pillion. Choosing one at random, I headed towards the coast, speeding through lanes and alleys past bicycles and cars, as well as many new two-storeyed whitewashed houses.

I was surprised to find the shore a hive of activity. Small groups of women were squatting there, legs crossed, hands busy mending sails or making nets while all the time they gossiped or hummed some folk ditty. They looked as though they had all been cast from the same mould; they wore a blue or black right-fastening cotton top with matching trousers and jade bracelets and silver anklets. Their hair was worn in a long, oblong-shaped bun adorned with red threads and taken well back off the forehead.

Venturing to start up a conversation, I found that this was the standard attire for married women. Single girls sport round, flat hair buns and a fringe. At wedding ceremonies or festivals, the latter show off their dowry by adorning their hair with various styles of silver hairpins; the greater the number, the wealthier the family.

Wandering around the village I noticed that there was not a single male in evidence. Men in this village do nothing but fish; everything else is left to the women. This rule applies even when





the men are on shore and resting at home. On the other hand, women are strictly forbidden to go to sea.

The horizon was almost blotted out by the brownish, fan-shaped sails of the boats. These sails, naturally off-white, had been dyed a reddish-brown with a fluid extracted from trees to render them more durable. The shallow waters prevented the larger motorized fishing boats from mooring near the shore. Fishermen had to use sampans to travel backwards and forwards between the shore and their boats, creating a lot of sea traffic.

I was told by a local woman that fishing is classified as off-shore or deep-sea fishing. A round trip could take anywhere from one day for the former to several weeks for the latter. Fishermen take long bamboo poles with them with a small square flag at the top to be used as warnings to other boats that they have already cast their nets in the vicinity and to mark their fishing zone.

Under Tianhou's Protection

Leaving Haifeng County I travelled to another fishing village, Jiazi in neighbouring Lufeng County. A couple of hundred boat-dwelling families formerly known as *danjia* moved from their floating homes during the 1950s and settled here by the sea. Fishing continues to be their main livelihood.

These fishermen's houses display the architectural characteristics of Shantou Prefecture and consist of a central main room and side wings. The walls are made of rammed earth one metre thick and painted a greyish-white to harmonize with the black roof. The gables are traditionally shaped like the handle of a *wok* (the all-purpose Chinese cooking pan) and decorated with simple floral patterns. These buildings are specially designed for their sturdiness, strength and durability in the face of wind and flood, a necessity along this coast open to typhoons from the South China Sea from early summer to late autumn.

Some of the houses are less than thirty metres from the high-water mark. From their courtyards, one can see a forest of masts, from their windows a sea of sails, the scene dramatically highlighted in the evening by the twinkling lights.

Since fishermen spend most of their time at sea, it is particularly important for them to have 'harmonious' winds and rain, in other words, good weather. Every household in the village has talismans over the lintel and auspicious couplets (black on a red background) down the sides of the



Fishermen's houses, their entrances decorated with bagua (4, by Sun Zening) and auspicious couplets (5, by Zhao Bin), look out onto a picturesque and timeless scene (1, by Cai Huisheng). Fishing zones are marked with flagged poles (3, by Chuan Nan). This young bride (2, by Cai Huisheng) will celebrate her wedding with sesame cakes baked in the form of a chicken (6, by Wong Chung Fai).

door-frame, the better to attract the favour of Tianhou (Tin Hau in Cantonese), the patron saint of fishermen. Often a *bagua* (Eight Trigram) design around a mirror hangs both inside and outside the house. This *bagua* is a system of signs representing the forces of nature, with broken lines for *yin*, unbroken ones for *yang* elements. Once used in divination, it is now mainly decorative. But, with the mirror in the centre, it is supposed to repulse evil spirits which might try to gain entrance.

As I strolled through the streets of the fishing village, I passed women sitting on their doorsteps mending nets and sails. This seemed to be the ideal location not only for work, but also for enjoying tea and having a good gossip. The attire of these *danjia* women is quite different to that seen in Haifeng. The front and back of their jackets are of contrasting colours, blue and red or blue and black, for example.

The day I was there happened to coincide with a wedding. I was invited even though I was a stranger. The walls of the main room in the bride's home were decorated with paper in contrasting red and green; even the curtain at the entrance was in a blood-red flowery design. The hosts greeted us with 'dowry cakes' made from sweetened flour baked crisp in large pieces and topped with savoury sesame seeds. These cakes were accompanied by *kungfu* tea, extra-potent tea served in miniature cups special to the Shantou and Chaozhou area.

Seafood Markets by the Sea

A short walk along the coast brought me to a seafood market. Every morning and evening crowds gather here to buy and sell. The market takes place under a simple canvas canopy supported by bamboo poles. This is the site of wholesale trading in a large variety of seafood, the most common species being lobster, prawn, yellow croaker, squid and crab.

Fish hawkers usually arrive on bicycles fitted with two huge baskets, hoping to acquire fresh, inexpensive seafood to sell in villages inland. They start shouting and quoting prices even before the boats reach the shore. I was surprised to notice that no weighing machines are used, the quantity being calculated solely by the number of baskets. Nor is there a pre-set market price; bargaining is the rule. The market is exceptionally noisy! The abundance of seafood and the market close by have resulted in the opening of several restaurants. One can enjoy freshly-cooked seafood here at remarkably cheap prices.

Lufeng County's renowned fishing grounds also boast a 'Gold Coast'. A stretch of more than ten kilometres of fine white sand nestles at the foot of Guanyin (Goddess of Mercy) Hill, undisturbed and inviting. There are boulders by the sea eroded into various fantastic shapes, the most eye-catching being the 'White Stone' further out to sea. It is so white and shining it looks more like an iceberg than anything else.





Reminders of the Southern Song

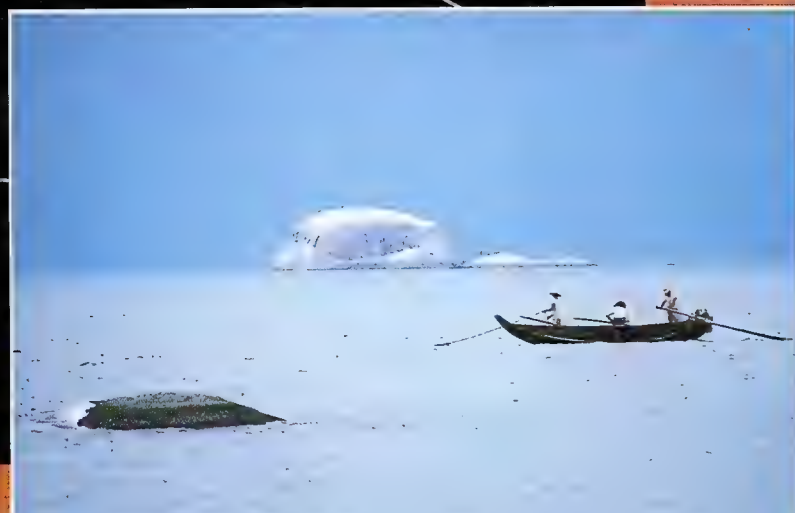
Not far from Jiazi is Jieshi, site of Xuanwu Hill, itself the site of the Yuanshan Temple and Fuxing Pagoda. These monuments were built more than eight hundred years ago during the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). A decade ago, some Overseas Chinese donated a large sum to renovate and rebuild the temple and the pagoda, which were badly dilapidated. The temple now has halls and ninety-nine cells for monks, as well as a large stage. The columns and beams of the stage are intricately carved, its sides decorated with over fifty stone carvings of traditional characters, flowers and birds. Scenes from folk tales are carved on the eaves. The pagoda on Xuanwu Hill was actually built of five thousand blocks of granite. Its three-storeyed octagonal silhouette has become the symbol of the hill, visible from quite some distance away.

Descending this hill, we headed for another tourist spot — Daidu Hill or, as the locals call it, Bold Hill. The story goes like this: in 1274 the Mongols, having already overcome the rulers of the Northern Song and established the Yuan dynasty in 1271, launched a major offensive against the Southern Song. They took Hangzhou, the Southern Song capital, in present-day Zhejiang Province in 1276 and captured the emperor, who died two years later. But some officials remained loyal to the Southern Song, among them one Lu Xiufu, who went to what is now Fujian Province and proclaimed Zhao Bing, a child of eight and a member of the former imperial family, as the new emperor. The party had to flee south pursued by Yuan troops. Legend has it that, at the passage of these fearsome warriors, all the hills and mountains trembled with fear with the notable exception of Daidu Hill, which is how it got its nickname.

At the foot of the hill there is a small temple dedicated to the memory of the infant emperor and his protector, Lu Xiufu. It is said that they climbed this hill on the way to safety at Xinhui, another Guangdong town west of the Pearl River delta. Ironically, the following year, 1279, the Mongols conquered Xinhui; the young emperor and his minister were forced to commit suicide by drowning themselves in the sea. Thus the legend.... But the two are not forgotten. Shabby and run-down the temple may be, but many people from Haifeng and Lufeng still make their way here to leave offerings at the shrine.

Translated by Chapman Lee

Guangdong's 'Gold Coast' boasts some strange rock formations (6). Fishing is the main preoccupation here: a danjia woman in the new village of Jiazi (1); the site of the morning and evening market on the beach (2, by Cai Huisheng); octopus hung to dry (5, by Sun Zening). Evidence of the past: details of Yuanshan Monastery on Xuanwu Hill (4) and the temple dedicated to Zhao Bing and his protector at the foot of Daidu Hill (3) (1, 3, 4 and 6 by Wong Chung Fai).



Yangshao Culture Painted Ware

PHOTOS & TEXT BY YI XUAN

In 1921 the village of Yangshao in Henan Province was the scene of an exciting archaeological discovery to which it gave its name. This provided the first clues to the late-Neolithic groups of peoples who lived first a semi-settled, then a fully settled life along the middle, lower, and eventually the upper reaches of the Huanghe (Yellow River) and its tributary the Weihe from around 5,000 to 3,000 B.C. Their culture stretched over the fertile loess lands of present-day Shaanxi, Shanxi, Henan and Hebei to Gansu and even Qinghai. The most famous sites of the Yangshao Culture are Banpo in Xi'an, Shaanxi, and Miaodigou in Sanmenxia, Henan.

With the development of agriculture and stock-breeding these early peoples were able to gain control of their food sources. This in turn created a need for many types of storage vessels and containers. Pottery, which would have been too fragile for the nomadic lifestyle, gained in importance for articles of everyday use. More elaborate items were also made for funerary and ritual purposes.

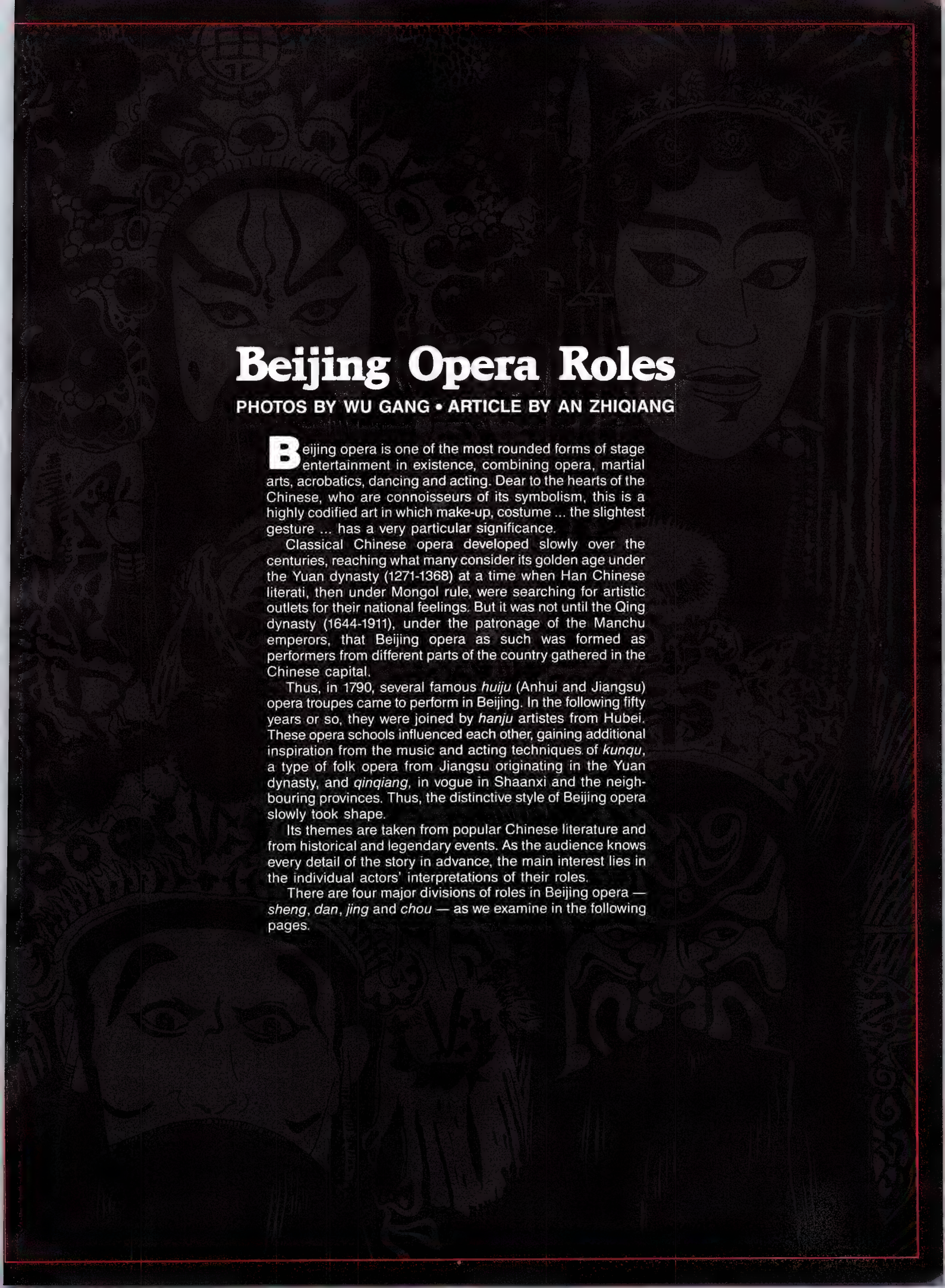
Of all the Yangshao Culture relics excavated so far, it is the fine-grained, burnished and painted pottery wares which have attracted the most attention. Mainly



made of red clay, they are generally decorated with abstract geometric motifs in black or red. Researchers believe that some of these are in fact derived from realistic representations of living things — fish, animals, birds, flowers, seeds and leaves — with which the people were familiar from everyday observation.

The two examples featured here were excavated in southeastern Gansu in Dadiwan, Qin'an County, only slightly over three hundred kilometres from Xi'an. The one on the left stands twenty-five centimetres high and belongs to the so-called Banpo type. It is decorated with four leaping fish — a common motif in Yangshao pottery — drawn with simple yet controlled strokes. The other is a narrow-mouthed vessel, 31.8 centimetres high and 6.8 centimetres wide at the base. The remains of two handles can be seen above its belly. The elegant pot is painted with a geometric pattern: three rings of leaves encircle cracked seeds (uncannily like staring eyes). Classified as being of the later Miaodigou type, this is a rare artefact, its mask-like human face possibly reflecting the transition from totem and nature worship to ancestor worship.

Translated by M.K.



Beijing Opera Roles

PHOTOS BY WU GANG • ARTICLE BY AN ZHIQIANG

Beijing opera is one of the most rounded forms of stage entertainment in existence, combining opera, martial arts, acrobatics, dancing and acting. Dear to the hearts of the Chinese, who are connoisseurs of its symbolism, this is a highly codified art in which make-up, costume ... the slightest gesture ... has a very particular significance.

Classical Chinese opera developed slowly over the centuries, reaching what many consider its golden age under the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) at a time when Han Chinese literati, then under Mongol rule, were searching for artistic outlets for their national feelings. But it was not until the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), under the patronage of the Manchu emperors, that Beijing opera as such was formed as performers from different parts of the country gathered in the Chinese capital.

Thus, in 1790, several famous *huiju* (Anhui and Jiangsu) opera troupes came to perform in Beijing. In the following fifty years or so, they were joined by *hanju* artistes from Hubei. These opera schools influenced each other, gaining additional inspiration from the music and acting techniques of *kunqu*, a type of folk opera from Jiangsu originating in the Yuan dynasty, and *qinqiang*, in vogue in Shaanxi and the neighbouring provinces. Thus, the distinctive style of Beijing opera slowly took shape.

Its themes are taken from popular Chinese literature and from historical and legendary events. As the audience knows every detail of the story in advance, the main interest lies in the individual actors' interpretations of their roles.

There are four major divisions of roles in Beijing opera — *sheng*, *dan*, *jing* and *chou* — as we examine in the following pages.

生

Sheng



The *sheng* is the principal male role. Portraying characters of distinction, *sheng* roles are sub-divided according to age, temperament and status. The *laosheng* is an older man, the *xiaosheng* a young man, while the *wusheng* is a warrior-like figure.

Laosheng are middle-aged or elderly characters, often scholars or retired officials. An example is the elderly servant Xue Bao in the opera *Sanniang Teaching Her Son*. When the family is forced to believe that the master of the household has met with some misfortune while travelling, Xue Bao devotes himself to helping his bereaved mistress bring up the young master. He is portrayed with a long white beard, signifying his venerable age.

Such details are stereotyped but important. In *The Three Kingdoms* (set in the period of the same name around 220-280), Guan Yu, the celebrated general later deified as the God of War, has a black beard to denote that he is middle-aged, a mature man, but still vigorous. Guan Yu's face is also painted red as a sign of his loyalty, bravery and spirit.

In other *laosheng* roles, a beard split into three denotes frankness and integrity, while a short beard is a sign of a coarse and primitive nature. *Laosheng* are generally positive and moral characters, but there are a few anti-heroes.

The *xiaosheng* does not wear a beard,

as he is supposed to be a very young man. *Xiaosheng* use both their natural voice and a falsetto in singing and recitation. In *Happy Reconciliation*, the character Mo Ji is a *xiaosheng*. This opera tells the story of a poor scholar who, on coming top in the examinations at the imperial academy, becomes ashamed of his wife's humble origins despite all she has done for him. He wants to get rid of her, even going so far as to try to kill her. It is only after many twists and turns of the plot that they are reconciled.

The *wusheng* is a martial role in which the actor uses his natural voice. A good example of this type is Gao Chong in *Fighting Against the Chariots*. Briefly, this opera concerns Gao Chong, a captain under the celebrated general Yue Fei (1103-1141) of the Song dynasty. Gao Chong feels that his talents are not appreciated and becomes very disheartened. Later, when Yue Fei has lost a series of battles in the war against the Jin forces, Gao Chong attacks the enemy position all by himself, counting on his military prowess to bring him success and prove his worth. He does indeed win several encounters but then, deep behind enemy lines without back-up, he is encircled. From the surrounding hills, enemy troops roll down small carts with pointed spikes (something like chariots, but without riders or horses), crushing him to death. In the opera version Gao Chong wears armour, symbolized by the four flags on his back, as well as thick-soled boots — the mark of the warrior.

Wusheng roles demand a very high degree of skill in martial arts, and the actor needs to be quick and nimble for the frequent acrobatic fighting sequences. Training starts in early childhood. In this *sheng* category more than any other, the

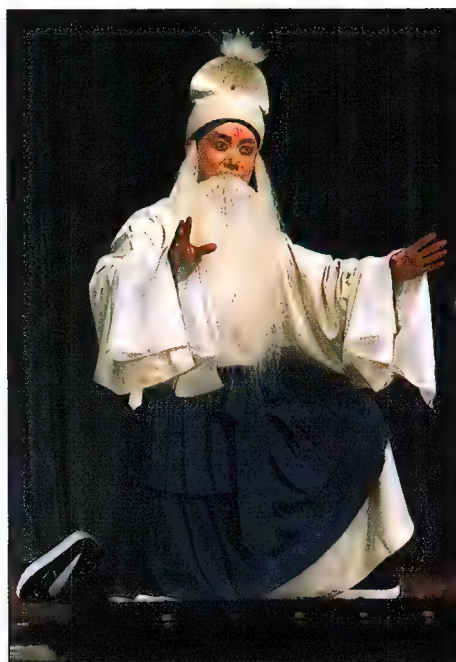
actor must master all the physical movements in addition to the acting and singing requirements of the role, and acquire perfect coordination of mind and body.

In addition, all actors and actresses must be proficient in an entire system of movements and gestures, stylized and symbolic. Thus, particular sets of movements signify the opening or closing of a door, entering or leaving a room, going up or down stairs, climbing a mountain, rowing a boat, wading a stream, etc. Every move must be precise and graceful and every pose assumed at the end of a movement almost sculptural, increasing the aesthetic effect. There are at least fifty sleeve movements expressing refusal, waving farewell, bidding someone welcome, wiping away tears.... Hand movements are even more complicated, and must be coordinated with the handling of stage props. All this demands long years of preparation and study, seven to ten years being the basic learning period, followed by constant practice for the rest of the performer's stage life.

- 1 Li Baochun as Guan Yu (*laosheng*)
- 2 Ye Jinyuan as Gao Chong (*wusheng*)
- 3 Zhang Xuejin as Xue Bao (*laosheng*)
- 4 The role of Mo Ji (right), a *xiaosheng*



2



3

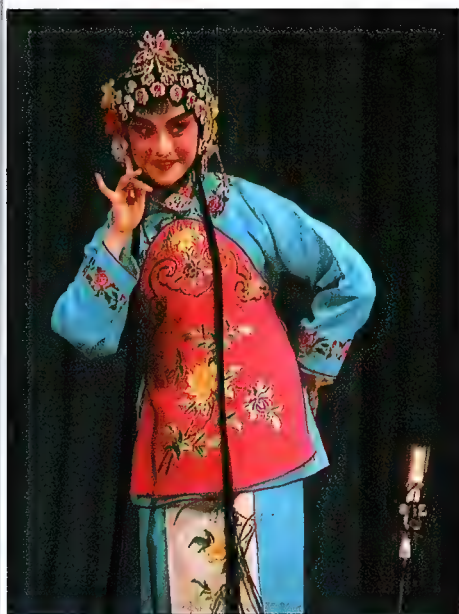


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Dan

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drops a jade bracelet as he leaves which is picked up by Sun Yujiao after much hesitation. Matchmaker Liu happens to spot the incident and eventually succeeds in making a match between the young couple.

The counterpart to the *wusheng*, the *daomadan* is a female warrior, an amazon on horseback such as Hua Mulan or Hu Sanniang. The latter is the leading role in *The Hu Mansion*, an opera based on an incident from the popular novel *Outlaws of the Marsh*. Hu Sanniang leads troops to the aid of her fiancé's household and overcomes his enemies. Since she is a fighter, this role demands a valiant and heroic bearing. The actress must be strong and skilled in martial arts, besides singing, acting and dancing ... a match for any hero. Nevertheless, on stage, through make-up and costume and through the rather flirtatious long pheasant feathers of the *daomadan*'s head-dress with which she teases her opponent, the essential femininity of the role is underlined.

The *laodan*, with singing and spoken dialogue very similar to those of the male equivalent, the *laosheng*, plus the addition of certain singing techniques of the *qingyi*,



4

portrays elderly women. For example, the Dowager Empress of Wu in *The Dragon and the Phoenix Show Their Colours*, an extract from *The Three Kingdoms*. The Prince of Wu, Sun Quan, lays a trap for the Prince of Shu, Liu Bei, tempting him to Wu territory with the offer of marriage to his sister. But Liu and his newly-wed wife flee to safety with the help of the Dowager Empress (Sun's mother). The actress (or actor!) playing this role takes slow but firm steps, presenting a regal and dignified bearing.

Nowadays there is little distinction between *huadan* and *qingyi*. Famous exponents of female roles such as Mei Lanfang broke down the artificial divisions. At the same time they absorbed *daomadan* techniques to create a new category, *huashan*. A celebrated example of this type is Yang Guifei in *The Drunken Beauty*. Historically, Yang was the favourite of Emperor Xuanzong (reign dates 712-756) of the Tang dynasty. In the one-act opera, the emperor has invited her to the Baihua Pavilion to drink wine and appreciate the flowers on a certain date. Yang has been waiting there for ages but still the emperor does not come. Overcome by disappointment and jealousy, Yang starts drinking alone and becomes hopelessly drunk. This role demands truly virtuoso skills in both acting and singing, and was one of Mei Lanfang's major triumphs.



5

- 1 Wu Xiangmei as Yang Guifei (huashan)
- 2 Chen Shufang as Sun Yujiao (huadan)
- 3 Zhang Chunming as Hu Sanniang (daomadan)
- 4 Wang Rongrong as Wang Baochuan (qingyi)
- 5 The Dowager Empress of Wu (laodan)



Jing

净



3

Also called *hualian* (painted face) because of the brilliant colours and designs of the facial make-up used to identify these characters, *jing* are normally played by men and represent male characters of strong personality: adventurers, heroes, bandits, etc. *Jing* can also be sub-divided according to the different background of the characters into *zhengjing*, *fujing* and *maojing*.

Zhengjing are men of higher social status with a dignified bearing. The old general Lian Po from *The General Reconciled with the Chief Minister* is one example. Lian Po relies so much on his merits that he refuses to accept a much younger man, Lin Xiangru, as prime minister and repeatedly humiliates him. Lin always gives in. Lian Po is ashamed and apologizes only when he learns that Lin yields not because of cowardice but because he has the overall interests of the country in mind. Every one of Lian Po's movements has to demonstrate his obstinacy and his pride. The role places more stress on singing and less on the

marital aspect, unlike the *wusheng*, although Lian Po is a military man.

The *fujing* is often a forthright but somewhat crafty character, with the emphasis on spoken dialogue and singing. For example, Lu Zhishen in *The Wild Boar Wood* (another episode from *Outlaws of the Marsh*). In this, Lu Zhishen stealthily follows his adoptive brother Lin Chong all the way to the Boar Wood in the hope of saving him when he is sent into exile, as the escorting soldiers have been given orders to kill Lin en route. Another example is Shan Xiongxin in *Suppressing the Five Dragons*. The setting is the Sui dynasty (581-618). General Wang Shichong loses every battle he fights against the armies of Li Shimin, future founder of the Tang dynasty. Shan Xiongxin, one of Wang's commanders, raids the enemy camp alone and fights bravely until he is captured by the opposing army. Li Shimin tries hard to persuade Shan to surrender, but he refuses and is finally executed.

Lu Zhishen and Shan Xiongxin are both vigorous and resolute, even inflexible, characters. The only difference lies in their background. Lu Zhishen has a short black beard and wears his shirt wide open, exposing his belly, an indication of his good-natured but coarse character. On the other hand, Shan is an officer and a gentleman. His long red beard and armour display his nobility. Even when he is handcuffed, his expression remains calm and serene — the mark of the hero.

The costume of the *maojing* is very unusual in that, under his costume, the actor has a bamboo basket (used for washing rice) on his chest and has straws tied to his arms, presumably to give him a bulkier appearance. Zhong Kui is an example of a *maojing*. In *Zhong Kui Marries Off His Sister*, Zhong Kui and his friend Du Ping go to the capital to take the imperial examinations. But Zhong Kui accidentally stumbles into a den of ghosts and is disfigured, becoming grotesque and ugly. Not surprisingly, he fails the examinations. In a rage, he commits suicide but, noting his righteous zeal, the King of Heaven puts him in charge of wiping out all demons and monsters. In return for the help Du Ping has given him by ensuring him a decent burial,

Zhong leads a procession of lesser ghosts to give Du his sister in marriage. This role involves a lot of drama and sweeping theatrical gestures.

Important in Beijing opera in general, facial make-up takes on overwhelming significance for the *jing* roles. The elaborate designs and the colours used have a precise symbolic meaning. In the operatic convention, a predominance of red, for example, stands for loyalty, courage and virtue. White means cunning and sometimes treachery. Black is used for a coarse, fierce, but open and straightforward nature, while blue signifies cruelty. Gold marks a god or a heavenly being. Details add subtle shadings to the character. For instance, a red flower near the face means a dissolute person.

- 1 Zhong Kui, a maojing role
- 2 Fang Rongxiang as Shan Xiongxin (fujing)
- 3 Chen Zhenzhan as Lian Po (zhengjing)
- 4 The character of Lu Zhishen (fujing)



2



4



A

Chou

Characterized by the white patch on and around his nose, often in a butterfly shape, the *chou* is a clown or buffoon, bringing a touch of lightness and humour and getting the audience to laugh when things have become overly serious or tragic in the main storyline. But the *chou* also often portrays representatives of the common people, with characters which are not particularly virtuous. *Chou* can be sub-divided into *wenchou*, *wuchou* and *choudan*, the latter a female role.

Wenchou also includes the category of *paodaichou*, comic officials. An example is Jia Hua in *The Dragon and the Phoenix Show Their Colours*. His white patch covers half his face to show the degree of humour involved in the character.

Yang Xiangwu in *Thrice Stealing the Nine Dragons Cup* is a good example of *wuchou*. The action takes place during the Qing dynasty. Yang Xiangwu does not like the new palace guard and steals into the palace to get the Nine Dragons Cup. He succeeds, then apologizes to the emperor. The emperor does not believe that he has really managed to get past the guard and orders him to repeat his feat and steal the cup again to prove it. Yang Xiangwu is brave, with a quick wit and a ready sense of humour. Skill at martial arts and acrobatics is one of the features of the *wuchou* role.

As for *choudan*, female clowns, these are usually elderly women, for instance Matchmaker Liu in *The Jade Bracelet*. The ladies are spared the indignity of the white dab on the nose!

雜 Za

Besides the above, there remain the *za*,



a lump term for the supporting roles. These include minor but essential characters such as the retinue of high-ranking officials, soldiers and servants. Four *za* actors equal a whole crowd of people. Sometimes, two sets of four are used to underline the importance of the main figures in the piece. The numbers are symbolic. Four soldiers and four generals on both sides of the stage represent an army several thousand strong.

Such symbolism permeates all aspects of Beijing opera. Yet, despite its abstract nature, the audience understands since the operatic conventions are followed strictly. This also does away with the need for complicated scenery, backdrops and fittings. Many actions are suggested with almost child-like simplicity. For example, circling the stage, whip in hand, means riding a horse. The colour of the whip shows the colour of the horse, but a slightly different style of whip means that it is no horse, but a donkey! Riding in a carriage is represented by an attendant holding flags

painted with a wheel design on either side of the performer. Walking round and round in circles indicates a long journey in general. A performer holding an oar or paddle and swaying or bending his knees to show the heavy swell demonstrates travelling by boat.

Simple props such as tables and chairs are used in a myriad ways. Depending on how it is positioned, a table may be an actual table, a judge's desk, an altar, but it can also show a change in level, e.g. climbing a mountain or scaling a wall. Jumping off a chair means that the person is jumping into a pit or a river. A band of fabric stretched between two posts is a gateway ... and so on ad infinitum.

In a sense, such stage effects are even more powerful than fancier settings would be since they depend on the audience entering into the spirit of the performance. The imagination does all the work, diverting little or no attention from the main protagonists.

To sum up, an opera troupe's reputation is based on the strength of its *sheng* and *dan* cast. A Beijing opera troupe will have trouble surviving if it cannot muster sufficient talent for these key parts. On the other hand, the *jing* and *chou* must be more than acceptable. If a troupe can boast famous actors and actresses in these four roles, its success with the knowledgeable public is assured.

Translated by Annette Lee

- 1 Lu Kunshan as Jia Hua (*wenchou*)
- 2 Zhang Chunhua as Yang Xiangwu (*wuchou*)
- 3 Matchmaker Liu (right), a *choudan* role



CELEBRATING THE SPRING FESTIVAL WITH



THE TU

PHOTOS BY CAI XINGMIN
ARTICLE BY CAI XINGMIN & LE TIAN

This Spring Festival we visited the remote Huzhu Tu Autonomous County in Qinghai, home of the little-known Tu minority. They number only 150,000 altogether, 45,000 of whom live in this county.

The approach route is complex. We first made our way by train to Xining, capital of Qinghai. We then took a long-distance bus forty-three kilometres to Weiyun, the county town, from where a local bus bore us the remaining thirty-six kilometres to our target, Wushi.

We put up at the only possible lodging-place in this village, the supply and marketing co-operative's guesthouse, paying four yuan a day for a double room warmed by a coal stove on which — the canteen being closed for the festival — we cooked our own meals of eggs, tinned meat and instant noodles, and boiled water for our tea.

Descendants of the Mongols?

The Tu belong to the Altaic ethnolinguistic family, which includes Turkic, Mongolian and Tungusic. Their language seems to be very similar to Mongolian, and in fact they have a history of close relations with the Mongols: they claim that they are descended from members of a garrison stationed here by Genghis Khan in the twelfth century who intermarried with local women. But although the Tu use their own language, backed up with Chinese borrowed words, for everyday life, Tibetan is their language for religious purposes, as they adhere to the Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. They thus combine aspects of Mongolian, Tibetan and Chinese

culture. Having no script of their own, they have adopted Han Chinese characters.

Their dress is very similar to that of Tibetans — if anything, even more colourful. The women's sleeves are adorned with red, yellow, green, purple and blue stripes, supposedly inspired by the rainbow. We noticed the same decorations on hems, belts and even shoes. The ensemble is set off by a loose, colourful waistcoat.

Both men and women wear swelling, wide-brimmed fur hats which sit low on their foreheads, the hallmark of Tu attire and certainly an enhancement of feminine charm and masculine bravura alike. Some women wear their hair in two pigtails, some a single plait tied with a red ribbon, the former an indication of married status.

One of the special features of the Tu is the musk pouch, a treasured possession which hangs at the waist of almost every married or engaged man. This is basically a pouch carefully embroidered by his lady with symbols of marital bliss and good fortune as a token of her love. Why musk? Well, it seems that, in common with many other minorities, young men and women used to choose their mate by means of a sort of singing contest. The girl would take an onion with her to throw to the man she fancied; the youth would then send a go-between to the girl's parents to make an offer. The onion became symbolic of their affection, but obviously there were drawbacks: the onion rather quickly went rotten! A lump of musk, handily protected by its special pouch, eventually took its place.



3

Wearing full national dress (1, 2, 3), Tu people flock in from the countryside (5) for the ritual dances at Younging Monastery (4).



4



5



Spectators watch enthralled as masked lamas (1, 4) perform their roles, even monks not directly involved sporting an extra colourful robe for the occasion (2). The white stupa at Youning Monastery (3).

Mystic Dances

The Spring Festival is marked by important religious ceremonies, as well as by the exposure to the faithful of the image of Buddha three times during the first month of the lunar year. The ceremonies take place at the Youning Monastery, five kilometres from the village. This monastery was constructed in 1604 in the Ming dynasty and had up to six thousand lamas and monks by the mid-seventeenth century. The local lamas resemble their Tibetan co-religionists in dress, but for this special occasion they donned an additional robe of red and yellow which added to the festive flavour.

The fifteenth day of the lunar year dawned frosty and cold, and feathery snow melted on our faces as we quickened our steps along the road leading to the monastery. From all sides, pilgrims, farmers and mounted herdsmen were making their way in from other villages and outlying areas. The square in front of the sutra-chanting hall was soon completely engulfed by crowds forming a huge semi-circle which overflowed on to the surrounding slopes.

Suddenly, each of the assembled took out a piece of steamed bread from under his or her outer garments and, as if by tacit agreement, went forward to place it in the centre of the square, forming two large heaps. One pilgrim even offered a whole sheep.

The solemn silence was abruptly shattered by the roll of the drums and the recitation of prayers which marked the entry of four masters of the law (sometimes known as

protectors of the faith) clothed in traditional robes of red, yellow, black and white. They began a sacrificial dance around the offerings, chanting sutras, waving their sleeves as they whirled to the faster passages, the frenzy of their gestures subsiding as the rhythm slowed. The mystic aura was intensified by the rope-like blindfolds which left only their mouths exposed.

Demonic Animal Masks

The drumming rose to another crescendo at the end of this dance and out came more masters of the law in bull's-head and horse masks. They proceeded to dance a sequence of movements in an austere and aloof manner. They were joined by another lama wearing a death's-head mask, probably representing the violator of the code who must be chased away, bearing with him all the evils which threaten the coming year.

Such ceremonies are celebrated every year by all Tibetan Buddhist sects, although there are variations from place to place. Their common aim is to drive out evil and chase away the throngs of demons which lurk in wait to afflict the people. The animal masks represent various demonic beings as described in the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*.

The dances generated great excitement among the onlookers. The people on the high ground surged forward as the image of Buddha was finally brought out from the hall and hung on the steps for the veneration of the faithful. Its removal one hour later signalled the end of the ceremony.

Translated by Wu Ling





4

'Kah Kee Cup' Dragon Boat Race

TEXT BY YANG LI

The side of the Longzhou (Dragon Boat) Pool in Jimei, a suburb of Xiamen, Fujian Province, was crowded with, some said, over one hundred thousand spectators. All eyes were riveted on over a dozen boats out on the water preparing for action.

Since the Duan Wu (Double Five) or Dragon Boat Festival held in June 1985, the Longzhou Pool has been the venue for the annual 'Kah Kee Cup' International Dragon Boat Race held in honour of the famous Overseas Chinese, Tan Kah Kee (see box). The beautiful pool, more than one hundred metres wide and eight hundred metres long, is part of the Jimei School Village — an extensive cluster of various kinds of schools and colleges and their facilities. This well-known scholastic complex is built on a peninsula and offers both superb views and excellent architecture.

The most powerful of the Chinese legendary animals, the dragon was believed to be able to summon wind and rain and control the forces of nature. But for those toiling away in a dragon boat race, which ever since 1984 has been listed as an official Chinese sports discipline, it is a struggle against themselves as much as against the elements.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, amid the cheers of the crowd, thousands of pigeons were released into the air together with a great mass of colourful balloons to mark the start of the event. The participants this year were local Chinese teams as well as teams invited from Australia, Japan, Hong Kong and

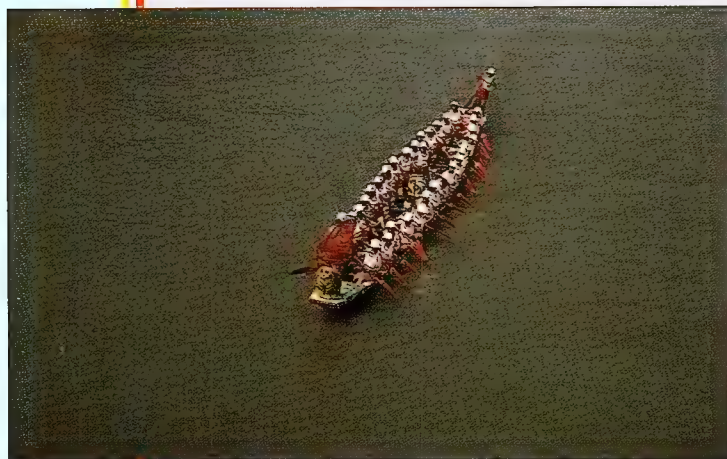


PHOTO BY SU MIN

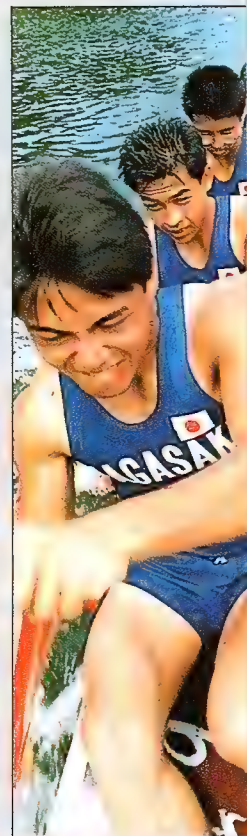




PHOTO BY
YANG KUN



PHOTO BY YANG KUN



PHOTO BY SU MIN

Macau. After the semi-finals only the teams from Australia, Japan and Hong Kong, the Shunde team from Guangdong, the Fujian team and the local Jimei team were left to compete in the final.

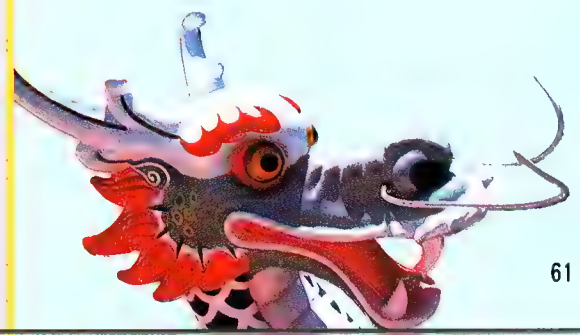
The formidable Shunde team, victors in fourteen of their last fifteen entries in dragon boat races at home and in other countries, forged ahead immediately, keeping their lead throughout, and shot across the line first. The veteran Australians in second place were overtaken towards the finish by the Fujian team and then, in the last few seconds of the race, by the Jimei team which crossed the line the merest whisker ahead of them.

Well, better luck next year!

Translated by M.K.



Tan Kah Kee (1874-1961), a wealthy Singapore industrialist who was a native of Jimei, is known for his enormous contribution to education, especially in China. From 1913-1920 he established numerous schools, including middle and primary schools, a navigation institute, agricultural and commercial colleges, etc., as well as funding libraries and other educational and cultural buildings and facilities in Jimei. These are now collectively referred to as the Jimei School Village and have since been developed further by the Chinese government. In 1921 Tan founded Xiamen University. In all, he set up or subsidized eighty schools and colleges during his lifetime.



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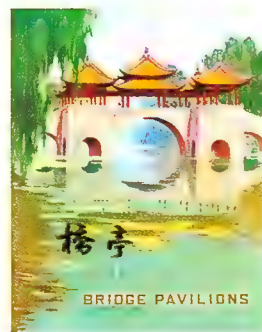
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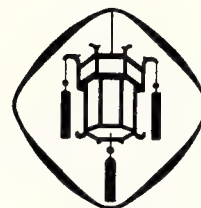


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Durant la dynastie Tang, la rumeur se répandit que le Palais impérial était hanté. L'empereur Tai Zong (dates de règne 629 — 649), troublé par des démons qui venaient l'importuner en lançant des briques et des tuiles à la porte de ses appartements, tomba gravement malade, faute de sommeil. Deux de ses généraux, Yuchi Jingde et Qin Shubao se proposèrent alors pour monter la garde à sa porte jour et nuit. Les démons n'osèrent plus s'approcher et l'empereur recouvra la santé.

Mais, aussi dévoués et vaillants qu'ils étaient, les généraux ne pouvaient monter la garde à jamais. L'empereur manda alors des peintres et leur fit exécuter sur les battants de la porte le portrait des deux généraux, Yuchi Jingde à gauche et Qin Shubao à droite. Paix et tranquillité régnèrent désormais dans le Palais.

L'histoire de ces deux généraux assez braves et redoutables pour éloigner les démons et exorciser les mauvais esprits se répandit dans le peuple qui les immortalisa et en fit ses dieux de la porte.

Ils sont presque toujours figurés en costumes militaires, armés d'un sabre et d'une hallebarde et dotés d'une figure féroce avec une grande barbe pour effrayer les démons.

La coutume s'est maintenue jusqu'à nos jours et chaque année lors de la Fête du Printemps (le Nouvel An chinois du calendrier lunaire), chaque foyer colle sur sa porte une nouvelle image de ces dieux. Ce peut être des chromos bon marché ou de ces splendides gravures sur bois particulièrement populaires, comme celles montrées ci-devant qui proviennent du Shanxi du Sud.



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Traditional door gods
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In the Tang dynasty, the rumour spread that the imperial palace was haunted. Troubled by ghosts, Emperor Taizong (reign dates 626-649) was unable to get any rest and finally became ill from lack of sleep. Two of his generals, Yuchi Jingde and Qin Shubao, volunteered to stand guard before the door to the palace day and night. The ghosts vanished and did not dare to appear again.

But, bold and strong as they were, even the generals could not stand in front of the palace for ever. Painters were summoned. They proceeded to paint ferocious images of the valiant generals on the leaves of the door, Yuchi Jingde on the left, Qin Shubao on the right. Peace and tranquillity reigned in the palace from then on.

This story of the two generals banishing ghosts and exorcizing evil spirits spread to the people. Gradually the generals became immortalized as protectors of households; they were venerated as door gods. The practice of painting them on doors spread far and wide.

It is still the custom today in many parts of China to paste a fresh couple of door gods on the door of the home at the time of the Spring Festival (Lunar New Year) as a symbol of general good luck and to invoke protection for the year ahead. Particularly popular are woodblock prints, such as the ones shown overleaf, which come from southern Shanxi.



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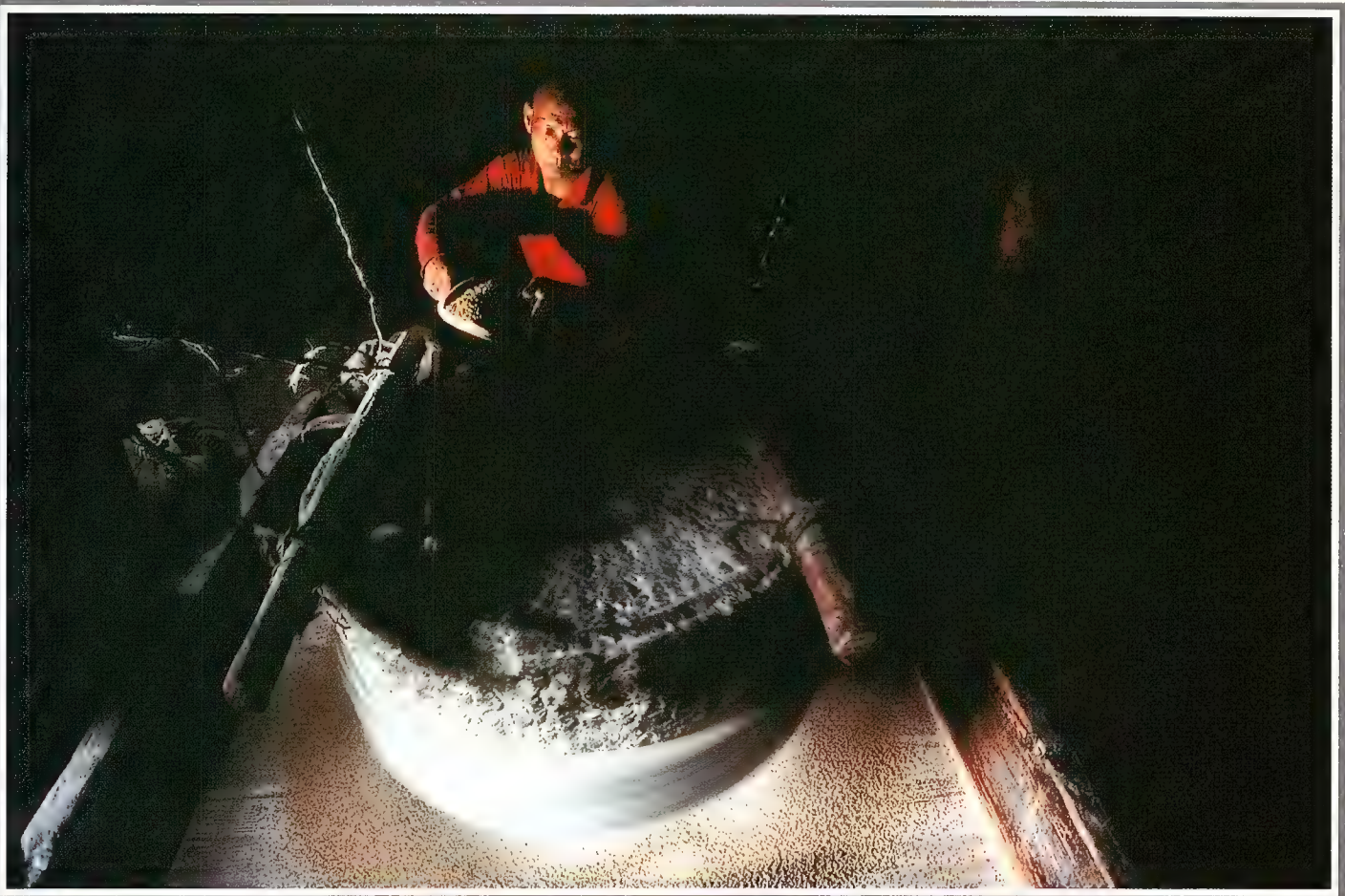
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Seen in Heishui County in northern Sichuan's Aba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Wheat is ground between hefty, rough-hewn, water-driven mill stones of a type which has not changed in countless centuries.



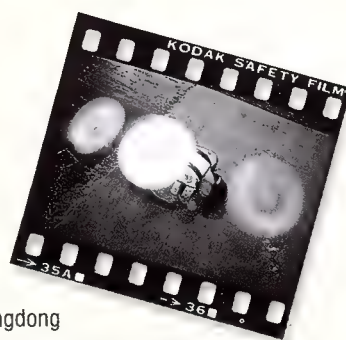
Still in northern Sichuan, young Tibetans gather, a colourful sight in their traditional braid-trimmed robes and brilliant waist cloths.







At Fenglingdu in southwestern Shanxi, a chance encounter with two fellow-professionals. Although rudimentary, their studio is well-lit and practical. In fact it contains all the essentials, and shows a talent for improvisation.



A pose of deep devotion, head bowed in prayer? Wrong! A member of the Guangdong Acrobatic Troupe is 'frozen' by the camera's eye in the intense concentration of mid-performance as she swivels three dishes high over her back. **G**

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The Man from Wudangshan

DRAWINGS BY LU
DEPING & XIAO MING
TEXT BY CAI HENG



The Wudangshan Mountains (1) rise in Junxian County in northwestern Hubei. Zhanqi Peak is the location of one of the major temples, Zixiao (Purple Clouds) Temple, famous for the Taoist adepts who lived there, all experts in the martial arts.

The founder of the Wudang school of boxing is said to have been Zhang Sanfeng, a Taoist priest who lived during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). A host of stories and legends have grown up around his person, many of them relating how he aided the weak and humble against the corrupt and powerful on his sorties outside his mountain retreat. The following is one of them.



Once, after a particularly heavy rainy season the abbot of the temple asked Zhang Sanfeng to take grain to the county seat and exchange it for salt, as merchants had been unable to get through on the flooded roads and the temple was urgently in need of salt (2). So Zhang set out with his mule laden with over one hundred kilos of grain.

On his way down the mountain, Zhang met a group of merchants, sadly dishevelled, who told him they had had an encounter with bandits a short while before (3). They warned Zhang to turn back. But Zhang was not afraid and continued his journey. He came across no-one on his way and arrived without incident at the county town.

When he reached the salt shop, he was surprised to see a large crowd of people gathered outside the door, complaining, scolding, banging on the doors, and generally venting their displeasure (4). It turned out that the price of salt had doubled that very day. The owner of the salt shop came out to address the crowd; he said that it was difficult to ship salt in because of the state of the roads, with the rivers still rising, and he felt justified in raising his price. What was more, he reserved the right to double the price again in the very near future, and his customers could take it or leave it!

Seeing such greed and selfishness — not to mention the fact that his full load of grain was now only worth a paltry couple of kilos of salt — Zhang stepped forward and lifted the owner off his feet. Helpers dashed out from inside the premises, but Zhang disposed of the first one swiftly (5), and the others lost courage. The owner, defenceless, finally agreed to lower the price of salt to what it had been before.

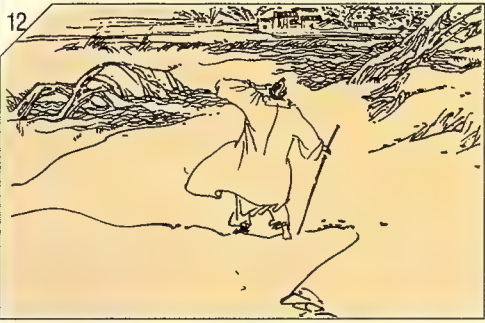
Once safely back inside his house, the shop-owner was so furious and humiliated (6) that he sent at once for his brother, who was none other than the chief of the bandit gang we mentioned earlier.

In the meantime, Zhang had left town with his purchases. In the dim light of early evening he was accosted by a group of fierce-looking men led by a black-browed fellow who accused Zhang of ill-treating his brother. The bandit chief told his men to take Zhang captive. But that was no such easy matter! Zhang overpowered the band easily, and the chief was forced into hand-to-hand combat. He too was beaten (7).

Seeing that it was almost dark and that a storm was brewing in the hills, Zhang was anxious to reach the temple. He jumped on his mule and rode away without further ado (8).

Unfortunately, by the following day, the bandit chief had gathered a larger group, and he and his men created a disturbance outside the temple gates. The abbot, a very strict Taoist, who was annoyed by Zhang's interference in worldly matters, sent him out to handle the problem on his own (9).

As before, Zhang disposed of the attacking bandits with ease (10), then turned and darted up a path towards the facing peak. Stunned by his sudden action, no-one dared chase after him for a moment despite the bandit chief's shouted commands, so he had to go after Zhang himself (11). Turning a corner on the mountain path, the chief was surprised by a strong kick, lost his knife, and was beaten soundly. Zhang said: 'Your life is worthless but, as you've done me no harm, I'll



spare you this time. But if I ever see you involved in evil again, I'll show no mercy. Go now!

Not wishing to return to the temple since he foresaw further trouble, Zhang decided to go and seek out a friend, Lu, who lived in a village some twenty kilometres east of the mountain (12). When he arrived there, it all seemed very quiet, with floods still affecting the low-lying areas. Still, he managed to find his way to Lu's house, only to find Lu's elderly father in tears and his younger brother very angry and upset (13).

Lu's father told him their sad story. The county governor, a greedy and grasping man, had tried to take advantage of the floods by collecting some sort of dyke tax from the people. The runner who had come to exact the tax behaved so badly, bullying Lu's father and sister, that Lu, also a martial arts expert, was provoked into knocking him down. The runner fled, but had just come back with a whole group of other officials and had taken Lu into custody.

Zhang immediately set out with Lu's brother for the county town. There they found Lu tied to the stone lion in front of the government office (14), having been sentenced to be executed the following day. Lu's brother could not control his feelings and sprang at the guards. After a struggle, Zhang and young Lu were subdued by a large number of the governor's men (15) and thrown into prison, where Lu soon joined them. In fact, the officials had been seeking just such an opportunity ever since an assistant from the salt shop had recognized Zhang when he first entered the town with young Lu. The shop-owner had immediately rushed to the governor and poured out his story, and the corrupt official had agreed to help him get even with Zhang.

Inside the prison, Zhang noted that the walls were made of blocks of stone, with the cracks packed with mud. Working on a crack with his finger-nail, he managed to loosen and eventually remove a block of stone. Finding that the wall gave on to an open space, everybody else willingly set to work and they soon cleared a hole large enough for them to climb through one by one (16).

Zhang, who was by now very angry at the governor, proclaimed his intention of getting rid of him on behalf of the people. All those who had escaped with him were more than happy to help him (17). They discussed their plans. Uprooting a sapling to use as a weapon (18), Zhang led his men to the front entrance of the government office. Easily overcoming the guards, they made their way through to the dining hall where the governor was entertaining some of his cronies, including the owner of the salt shop and his bandit brother.

Taking the party by surprise, they killed the governor. The bandit chief made an attempt to fight, but this time Zhang had not the least intention of showing any mercy and put an end to his wicked deeds once and for all (19). Putting the place to the torch, Zhang bade farewell to his helpers and set off on further travels without delay. It was some time before he returned to Wudangshan and the religious life.

Translated by M.K.

Reproduced from *Wudang Heroes*, published by Huacheng Press, Guangdong



We present here the first of two excerpts from 'The Battle of the Red Cliff', an episode in *The Three Kingdoms* (also known in English as *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*). This early Ming-dynasty work, China's very first historical novel and one of the longest novels in the whole of Chinese literature, is ascribed to Luo Guanzhong, a native of Taiyuan in Shanxi, who lived roughly between 1330 and 1400.

The book is based to a large extent on historical fact, its background being the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280), a time of great confusion and unrest in China as feudal rulers and their factions struggled for military and political ascendancy on the downfall of the Eastern Han. To reduce a highly complex situation to its basics, the prime minister to the Han court, Cao Cao, held the vast territory of the north and established the Kingdom of Wei; Liu Bei, a descendant of the imperial house, occupied the southwest where he founded the Kingdom of Shu; while Sun Quan, a powerful nobleman, held the rich lands of the southeast and set up the Kingdom of Wu. The main protagonists were Cao Cao and Liu Bei, Sun Quan allying himself now with one, now with the other, as seemed expedient.

Historically, this period saw the rise of a number of valiant leaders, heroes and wise men whose exploits were recorded in, for example, *The History of the Three Kingdoms*, a third-century work by Chen Shou. As time went by a wealth of legends grew up around their deeds so that, by the tenth century, there were story-tellers who specialized solely in tales of the Three Kingdoms Period, such was their popularity. The author is thought to have based his novel primarily on such story-tellers' scripts or 'prompt books' from the Song and Yuan dynasties (960-1368).

The earliest extant edition of Luo Guanzhong's novel was published in 1494. As with the later *Outlaws of the Marsh*, subsequent editors improved on the original, rewriting, adding, deleting, rearranging chapters, and so on. The novel is now generally presented as a work of 120 chapters. This classic of Chinese literature has had an immeasurable influence on other literary forms, fuelling dramas, operas and poetry. It has also at times been used as a textbook on tactics and strategy, so vividly are the battles and campaigns presented.

The section dealing with the Battle of the Red Cliff (believed to have taken place on the River Yangtze at Chibi in Hubei Province) covers eight chapters and is celebrated for its detailed portrayal and psychological insights. The shrewdness and political acumen of Liu Bei's adviser, Zhuge Liang, the compassion and valour of the celebrated general Guan Yu, Liu Bei's sworn brother, as well as the complexity of Cao Cao — hypocritical and crafty, a truly Machiavellian statesman — are brought out as we follow the twists and turns of the plot. It all makes for wonderfully compulsive reading even today. It is of course coloured by the author's own affiliations. Having himself joined a revolt against the Mongol Yuan dynasty, Luo Guanzhong clearly sympathizes with Liu Bei, a scion of the Han, against Cao Cao.

In this particular excerpt, Chapter 48, Liu Bei

and Sun Quan have formed a rather uneasy alliance. Machinations are still underway to set fire to Cao Cao's fleet and deal him a crushing blow. Ping Tong, who has been secretly briefed by Zhou Yu, adviser to Sun Quan, has tricked Cao Cao into chaining his boats together. The scene is set here for the grand debacle with which we will continue in our next issue.

CHAPTER 48 of *The Three Kingdoms*

Cao Cao Feasting on the Yangzi Makes a Song The Northern Force Attacks in Chained Ships

Pang Tong whirled round, aghast, only to find that the speaker was his old friend Xu Shu. Reassured, he looked round and saw no one else was near. "If you give me away," he said, "you will be the death of the people of eighty-one prefectures south of the Yangzi!"

The Battle of the Red Cliff (I)

Xu Shu retorted with a laugh, "What of the lives of Cao Cao's eight hundred and thirty thousand men?"

"Do you really mean to wreck my scheme, then?"

"I have always wanted to repay Liu Bei's kindness. And, because Cao Cao caused my mother's death,¹ I have sworn never to advise him any more. Why then should I wreck your scheme, brother? But I have followed Cao Cao's army here, and if it is defeated how am I to escape in the indiscriminate slaughter? Show me a safe way out and I promise to shut my mouth and keep out of the way!"

Pang Tong laughed. "For a man of your intelligence, that shouldn't be hard."

"Still I wish you would make some suggestion."

Then Pang Tong whispered something into his ear which pleased Xu Shu, who thanked him. After that Pang Tong took his leave and rowed back to the south bank.

That night Xu Shu secretly sent men to spread rumours in the camp. The next day the soldiers

gathered in threes and fours, heads together, their tongues busy wagging. And a scout reported to Cao Cao that Han Sui and Ma Teng of Xiliang were rumoured to have rebelled and to be advancing against Xuchang. Startled by this news, Cao Cao promptly summoned his advisers and said, "My one anxiety on this expedition has been Han Sui and Ma Teng in the rear. Now this rumour has spread through the army. Though there may be no truth in it, we must be on our guard."

At once Xu Shu stepped forward to speak. "I have lived on your bounty, Prime Minister, and done nothing in return. Give me three thousand horsemen and I shall go straight to the San Pass and guard it. You shall know at once of any emergency."

"If you will do this, I shall have no more worry," said Cao Cao, very pleased. "There are already troops at the pass, who will also be under your command. I shall give you three thousand men and Zang Ba as your vanguard. Go as fast as you can, without a moment's delay!"

Xu Shu took his leave and set off with Zang Ba. This was Pang Tong's plan for securing his old friend's safety.

Xu Shu's departure took a weight off Cao Cao's mind. After riding out to inspect his fortresses, he went to his naval camp, boarded a large ship and had his commander's flag hoisted on the mast. On both sides, from the upper deck, could be seen strong fortifications manned by a thousand archers. It was the fifteenth of the eleventh month, in the thirteenth year of the Jian An period.² The day was sunny and the water calm. Cao Cao ordered a feast on board for his officers that evening. When dusk fell, the moon rose over the eastern hills making all as bright as day. The Yangzi under the moonlight seemed a length of white silk. The Prime Minister sat there in state surrounded by hundreds of armed attendants in bright embroidered silk, while officers, civil and military, were seated in due order.

Cao Cao looked at the Nanping Hills, lovely as a painting, Chaisang in the east, Xiakou in the west, Mount Fan in the south, and Wulin in the north. Elated by the splendid prospect, he said to his officers, "Since devoting my forces to the just cause of ridding the Han empire of evil influences, I have vowed to cleanse all the land within the Four Seas and pacify the whole world. Now only the Yangzi Valley remains unsubdued. With my million veterans and all you gentlemen to help me, I have no doubt of success. Once the Lower Yangzi Valley is conquered and the empire at peace, together we shall enjoy prosperity and honour, living in happiness and tranquillity."

All his officers rose from their seats to thank him, saying, "We hope for a speedy victory. All our lives we shall shelter under your good fortune!"

In high good humour, Cao Cao called for more wine and they drank till midnight. Then, very merry, he pointed to the south bank, saying, "Zhou Yu and Lu Su do not know the will of Heaven. But now some of their men are on our side, working against them from within. Heaven is aiding us!"

"Do not speak of that, Prime Minister," cautioned Xun You, "or the secret may leak out."

Cao Cao only laughed and answered, "I can trust you, gentlemen, and my attendants as well. What harm is there in mentioning this?" Pointing to Xiakou he went on, "Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang are mere ants, yet the fools want to challenge



Lü Bu, destroyed Yuan Shu, conquered Yuan Shao and penetrated deep into the northern wastes as far as Liaodong. I have ranged the whole empire, not failing in my great task. This scene today stirs me to the depths. I will sing a song, and you can join in the chorus." And so he sang:

Songs should go with wine,
For man's life is short
As the morning dew;
How much time has passed!
Deeply moved at heart,
I cannot forget my grief;
The one thing to banish care
Is Du Kang's³ brew.
Blue is the scholar's gown.
Deep my admiration;
I ponder and look around;
All my thoughts are of you.
Stags cry as they crop
On wormwood in the wilds;
I have honoured guests,
Sound citherns and flutes!



Cao Cao

Mount Tai!" Then turning to his officers he said, "I am fifty-four this year. If I subdue the Yangzi Valley, I have one desire. Lord Qiao was a good friend of mine in the old days, and I know his two daughters are lovely beyond compare; but they were married to Sun Ce and Zhou Yu. I have recently built the tower of the Bronze Bird by the River Zhang. If I subdue the Yangzi Valley, I shall take these two beauties to this tower to comfort my declining years. Then all my wishes will be satisfied." With that he laughed heartily.

As Cao Cao was talking and laughing, he heard crows cawing in their southward flight.

"What makes them caw at night?" he asked.

His attendants answered, "They have mistaken the bright moonlight for dawn. So they fly cawing from the trees."

At that Cao Cao laughed again. He was now quite drunk. Grasping his lance, he took his stand at the prow, poured a libation of wine into the river, and drained three brimming cups. Then lowering the lance he said to his officers, "With this lance I have vanquished the Yellow Turbans, captured



Liu Bei

Cao Cao saw that the speaker was Liu Fu, prefect of Yangzhou, a native of Xiang County in the Principality of Pei. This Liu Fu had begun his career at Hefei, where he had ruled a prefecture, rallied all those who were running away, set up schools, made the soldiers till the land, and succeeded in restoring order. He had served Cao Cao for many years and had rendered valuable service.

Holding his lance at the level, Cao Cao asked, "What did I say that was ill-omened?"

"You spoke of crows flying southward under a bright moon and few stars, circling the trees three times yet finding no resting place. This is a bad omen."

Cao Cao flared up and shouted, "How dare you try to spoil my pleasure?" Thrusting with his lance, he killed Liu Fu on the spot, to the horror of all the assembled. So the feast broke up.

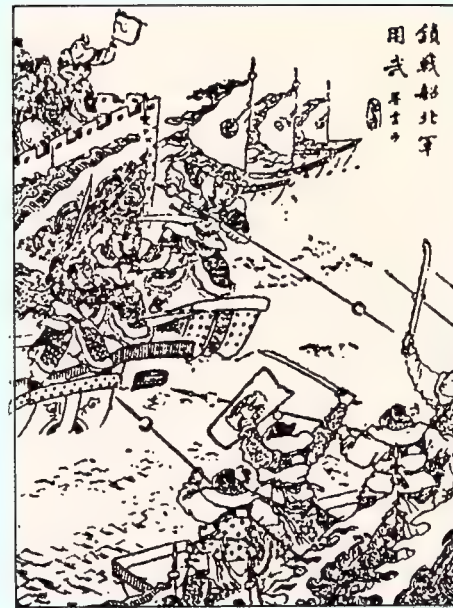
The next day, recovered from the effects of wine, Cao Cao was full of remorse. When Liu Fu's son Liu Xi asked for the body of his father for burial, Cao Cao shed tears. "Yesterday I was



Zhou Yu

Bright is the moon,
Revolving without end;
My heart is full of care,
Which will never cease.
Friends cross fields and meadows
To come to me;
We feast and make merry,
And think of friendships past.
Bright the moon and few the stars,
Crows are southward bound;
Three times they circle the trees,
But can find no place of rest.
The mountain can never be too high,
Nor the ocean too deep.
The Duke of Zhou⁴ stopped his meal to
welcome guests,
And all men flocked to him.

He sang and the officers joined in the chorus. They were all very merry except one man who approached him and said, "On the eve of battle, when men must risk their lives, why do you utter such ill-omened words?"



drunk," he said. "I should never have killed your father, but it is too late for regret. Bury him with the honours of a chief minister." He sent soldiers to escort the coffin back that same day for burial.

The following day his naval commanders, Mao Jie and Yu Jin, came to report, "All the vessels, large and small, have been chained together and our flags and weapons are ready. Please give the order to set sail."

Cao Cao took his place in a large ship in the centre of the squadron, where all his officers were gathered to receive orders.

The different units of the land and naval forces were distinguished by flags of five different colours. The flag of the main naval force under Mao Jie and Yu Jin was yellow, that of the vanguard under Zhang He red, the rearguard under Lü Qian had a black flag, the left force under Wen Pin a green one, and the right force under Lü Tong a white one. The vanguard of the cavalry and infantry led by Xu Huang had a red banner, the rearguard led by Li Dian a black one, Yue Jin's left force a green one, and Xiahou Yuan's right force a white one. Xiahou Dun and Cao Hong were in charge of liaison between the land and naval forces, while Xu Chu and Zhang Liao were responsible for troop movements during battle. All the officers were assigned to different units.

After Cao Cao had issued his orders, drums were sounded three times in the naval camp, and the ships sailed out by different ways. There was a strong northwest wind that day, yet the vessels with their sails hoisted charged through the waves as securely as on dry land. The northerners exercised vigorously aboard with spears and swords, and the different squadrons kept to their appointed places, while more than fifty small boats plied to and fro inspecting the advance.

Cao Cao, watching the manoeuvres from his platform, was delighted to think he had found the way to certain victory. He ordered the ships to furl sail and they returned to the camp in perfect order.

Back in his tent, Cao Cao told his advisers, "If Heaven were not on my side, should I have got this marvellous plan from the Phoenix Fledgling? By chaining the boats together, we can cross the river as if it were dry land."

Cheng Yu said, "It is true that chaining makes them secure; but in case of attack by fire we should find it hard to get away. This is the danger."

Cao Cao laughed. "You look well ahead, yet there is something you have overlooked."

"Cheng Yu is right," said Xun You. "Why do you laugh at the idea?"

Cao Cao replied, "Attack by fire depends largely on the wind. Now this is the middle of winter, when only the west and north winds blow, not those from the east or south. We are on the northwest, the enemy on the south bank. If they use fire, they will destroy themselves. So we have nothing to fear. Had this been the tenth month, I should have taken precautions."

This convinced all his officers, who exclaimed, "The Prime Minister is more far-sighted than any of us."

Looking round at the assembly, Cao Cao said, "Our men from the north are not used to boats. If not for this plan, how could we cross the dangerous Yangzi?"

Then two officers stepped forward and declared, "Though we come from the north, we

are accustomed to the water. Give us twenty boats and we shall go straight to capture the enemy's flags and drums. That will show that we of the north can fight on water too."

The speakers were Jiao Chu and Zhang Nan, two of Yuan Shao's former officers.

"I doubt if you, coming from the north, can succeed," said Cao Cao. "The men of these parts are thoroughly at home on the river. This is no game but a matter of life and death."

Still the two protested loudly, "If we fail, we are willing to suffer any punishment!"

"All the large ships are chained together. That leaves only small boats, each of which holds no more than twenty men. They would be little use in a fight."

"It would not be a remarkable feat if we used big ships," said Jiao Chu. "Let us have a score of the small boats, half for Zhang Nan and half for myself. We shall go straight to the enemy's camp today, seize a flag, kill a commander and come back!"

"I'll give you twenty boats and five hundred



picked troops armed with lances and powerful crossbows. At daybreak tomorrow we shall send out the large vessels to awe the enemy from a distance, and Wen Pin shall go with thirty boats to cover your return."

Then the two officers went away satisfied.

The next morning food was prepared at the fourth watch. By the fifth watch all was ready. When drums and gongs sounded in the naval camp, the ships moved out and took up their positions on the river. All along the Yangzi green and red banners fluttered. Then Jiao Chu and Zhang Nan set off with twenty scouting boats for the south bank.

The forces on the south bank had heard the din and drumming the previous day and seen Cao Cao's naval manoeuvres in the distance. Scouts reported this to Zhou Yu, who climbed to the top of a hill to watch; but Cao Cao's troops had already withdrawn. This morning there was another thunderous drumming, and when scouts climbed to high ground to have a look, they saw small boats

bounding towards them over the waves. They hastily reported this to headquarters. Zhou Yu called for volunteers to engage the enemy, and Han Dang and Zhou Tai offered themselves. Zhou Yu was pleased and ordered his different commanders to be vigilant and not move into action rashly.

Han Dang and Zhou Tai sailed out separately, each with five scouting boats.

Meanwhile the small craft of bold Jiao Chu and Zhang Nan were bearing down on them swiftly. Wearing armour, his lance in his hand, Han Dang stood in the prow of his boat. Jiao Chu, who was ahead of Zhang Nan, ordered his men to shoot once they came within range, but Han Dang warded off the arrows with his shield. And when Jiao Chu attacked with his lance, with one thrust Han Dang killed him.

Zhang Nan was coming up with great shouts when Zhou Tai intercepted him. The northern officer was standing in the prow with his lance, while his men were shooting wildly. When the two boats were still some seven or eight feet apart, Zhou Tai, his shield in one hand, a sword in the other, leapt on to the enemy's boat. One sweep of his sword and Zhang Nan toppled into the river. Then Zhou set about killing the rest of the crew. The other boats turned and rowed hard for the north bank. Han Dang and Zhou Tai pursued them as fast as they could. In midstream, Wen Pin's squadron came up, and the battle was on again.

Zhou Yu with some of his officers was standing on a hill to watch the northern warships, which were deployed in good order with their different banners and ensigns. Then he saw Wen Pin engage Han Dang and Zhou Tai, who attacked so hard that the northerners could not withstand them but turned to retire with the southerners after them. Not wanting his commanders to get too far into enemy waters, Zhou Yu hoisted a white flag and sounded gongs to recall them. Then Han and Zhou brought their boats back.

From the hilltop Zhou Yu could see that the enemy's ships across the river were withdrawing into their camp. He turned and said to his officers, "The northern vessels are packed as closely as reeds, and Cao Cao is very wily. How can we defeat him?"

Before anyone could answer, the flagpole of the yellow banner in the centre of the enemy fleet snapped in the wind and fell into the river. Zhou Yu laughed aloud. "That's a bad omen for them!"

That same instant a strong wind sprang up, making waves beat against the shore. Zhou Yu's banner flapped against his cheek, and a thought flashed through his mind. With a sudden cry he fell backwards, coughing up blood. His men hastened to lift him up, for he had fainted.

Sudden laughter, a sudden cry;

Hard for men of the south to beat those of the north!

¹ Xu Shu had served under Liu Bei, but Cao Cao kept his mother in the north and forged a letter in her name ordering him to enter Cao Cao's service. When Xu returned to his mother and she learned why he had come, she hanged herself.

² A.D. 208.

³ Known in legend as the first man to brew wine.

⁴ An outstanding statesman of the eleventh century B.C.

Translated by Yang Xianyi & Gladys Yang

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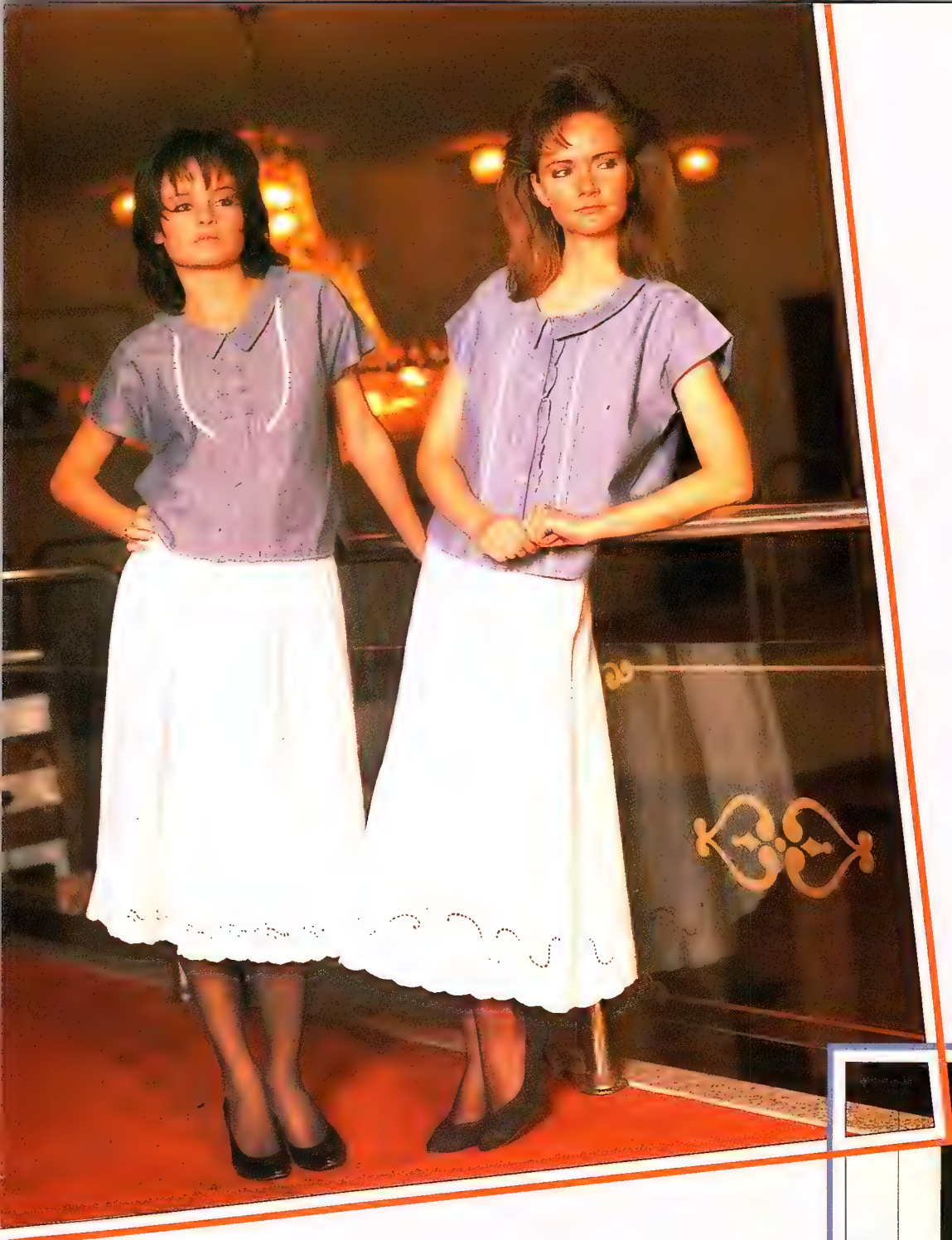
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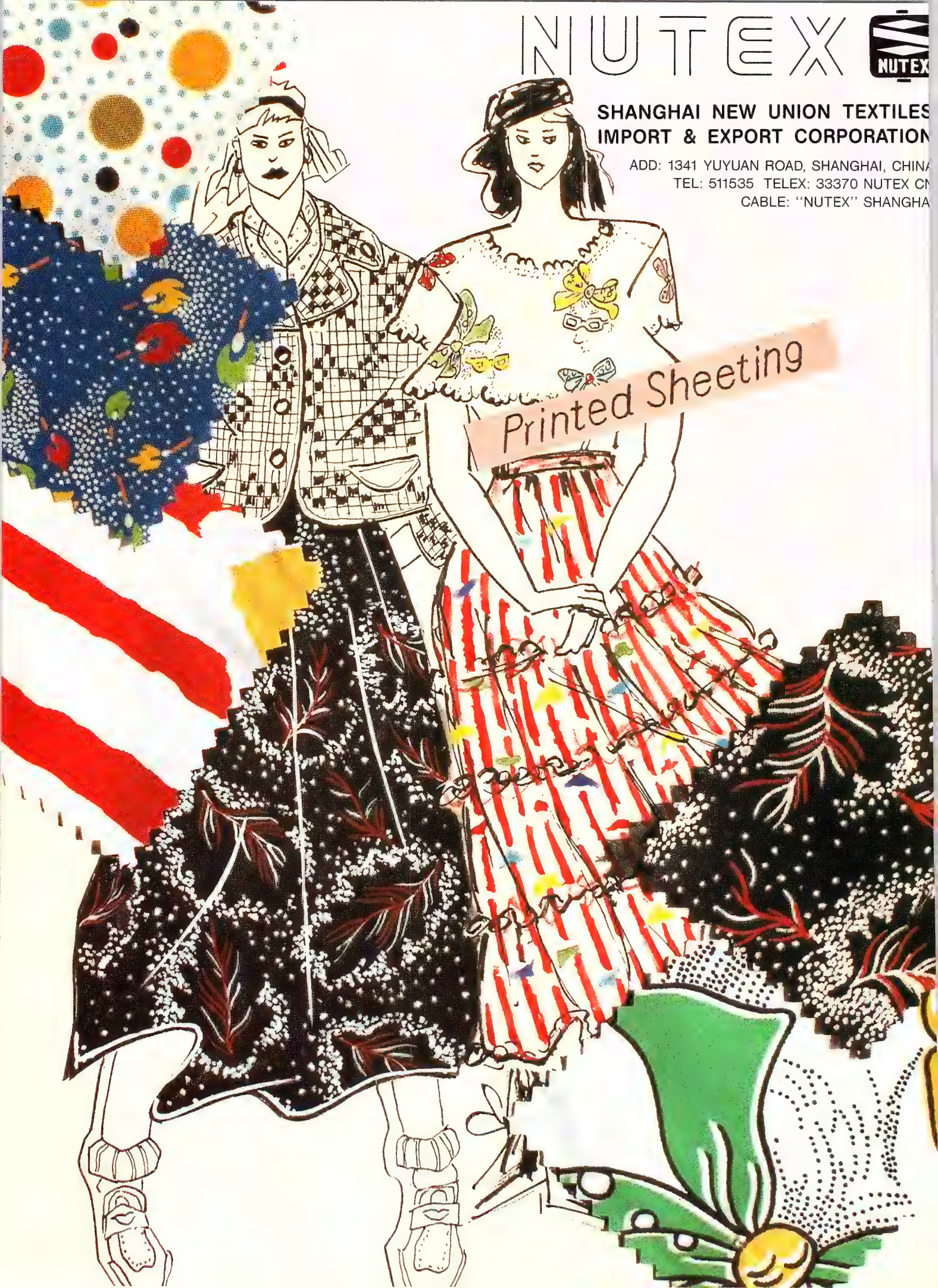
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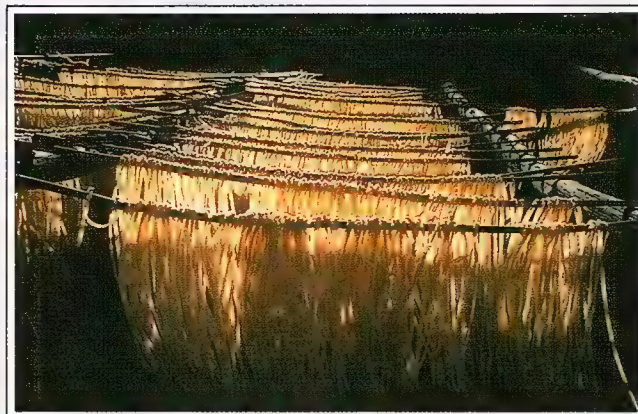
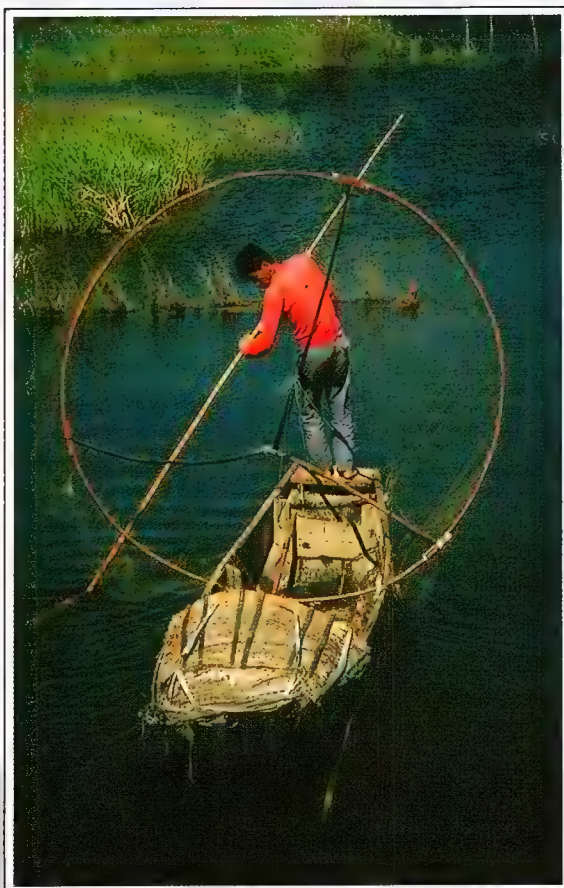
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SOUTH OF THE CLOUDS



Images of the Bai homeland near Lake Erhai – livelihood (1), village environment (3), religious life (7). An ancestral shrine in a Dali house (5). North of the lake is Shaping; its market not only sells necessities such as fish traps (2) and medicinal ingredients (4), it also offers moxibustion therapy (6).



5



6



7

This is a land unlike any other within the boundaries of China. Populated by twenty-four distinct minority groups, Yunnan Province is rich in old-world ambience. It is the kind of place where travellers with a romantic view of the pre-industrialized world can spend endless days exploring the streets of mediaeval villages.

A land of eternal spring, northern Yunnan Province supported highly developed cultures like the Kingdom of Dali for centuries. Two hundred and fifty miles northwest of Kunming, the capital of the province, Dali thrived as an independent kingdom until it fell to Kublai Khan in 1253.

This ancestral home of the Bai people is today also inhabited by Muslims and Han Chinese, although the majority of the population remains Bai. Lake Erhai to the east and the Cangshan Mountains to the west create a setting of great natural beauty and rich agricultural land. Valuable natural resources and its location on a major north-south trade route were major factors in the development of the Kingdom of Dali and the Bai culture.

One hundred and fifty miles north of Dali and just south of the River Yangtse lies the 800-year-old town of Lijiang, capital of the Naxi people. Located on the edge of the Tibetan plateau, its inhabitants are believed by most scholars to be descendants of Tibetan nomads. Dr He, renowned for his herbal treatment of local and Western patients, lives in Baisha Village just north of Lijiang.

To the southeast of Kunming lies the homeland of the Sani people, a branch of the Yi Minority. In rich agricultural land near the famed Stone Forest, the Sani people live in adobe villages and grow crops much as they have for centuries. The streets of Lunan, the county town, are alive on market days with Sani women in beautifully designed traditional clothing.

In an area about the size of California, Yunnan Province offers the traveller an intimate look at a magnificent land. Yunnan, which means 'South of the Clouds', retains enough of its former grandeur to reward those who venture into it with an experience not soon to be forgotten.

Barbara Bussell



CAAC Flights to and from Wuhan

Route	Days of Week	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.
Beijing — Wuhan	2 3 4 5 7	08:30	10:35	1333
	1 3 6	10:15	12:00	3118
Wuhan — Beijing	2 3 4 5 7	11:25	13:25	1334
	1 3 6	07:35	09:20	3117
Guangzhou — Wuhan	1 4 7	14:45	16:15	1382
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	11:45	14:30	3356
Wuhan — Guangzhou	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	20:45	22:20	3343
	1 2 4	06:55	08:30	3341
Hong Kong — Wuhan	1 2 4 6	12:00	13:40	CA376
	1 2 4 6	09:30	11:00	CA375
Nanjing — Wuhan	1 3 5 7	18:55	20:45	3512
	1 4 6	14:15	15:45	4504
Wuhan — Nanjing	2 4 6	17:50	19:25	5307
	1 3 5 7	16:20	18:05	3511
Shanghai — Wuhan	1 4 6	13:30	15:05	5323
	2 5	16:30	18:05	5331
Wuhan — Shanghai	2 4 5 7	07:35	08:50	3513
	1 4 6	20:15	21:45	5324
Xi'an — Wuhan	3 5 7	07:40	09:40	2537
	3 5 7	12:45	14:50	5220
Wuhan — Xi'an	3 5 7	15:40	17:50	2538
	3 5 7	09:50	12:00	5219

Hotels in Wudangshan

Name	Address	Tariff* (¥)
Wudang Guesthouse	Wudangshan Town (Laoying)	5-20
Nonghang Reception Centre	Wudangshan Town (Laoying)	5-20
Zixiao Guesthouse	Zixiao Temple	5-20
Tianchi Guesthouse	Jinding	3-17

* Tariff subject to change

Train Schedules Zhengzhou — Xiangfan — Shiyan — Chongqing

327/326 F.T.	293/292 F.T.	241 F.T.	189 F.T.	183/182 F.T.	Train No.	184/181 F.T.	190 F.T.	242 F.T.	294/291 F.T.	328/325 F.T.
		11:22	—	12:14	Zhengzhou	19:51	—	10:00		
From Wuhan	From Wuhan	—	06:21	—	Luoyang	—	19:54	—	To Wuhan	To Wuhan
15:52	18:35	20:14	14:02	21:25	Xiangfan	10:31	12:29	23:40	11:38	00:27
18:31	—	—	—	—	Wudangshan	—	—	20:47	—	21:16
19:26	21:31	23:19	16:57	00:20	Shiyan	07:23	08:58	19:54	08:14	20:15
	13:25		08:02		Chongqing		17:32		16:13	

F.T. — Fast through passenger train

Average Climatic Conditions of West Hubei Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture

		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Lichuan	Temperature (°C)	1.7	3.0	7.8	12.9	17.1	20.3	23.4	22.8	18.6	13.6	8.3	3.7
	Rainfall (mm)	16.7	29.9	68.0	96.9	174.6	158.6	177.0	163.0	169.5	109.8	66.3	30.0
Xianfeng	Temperature (°C)	2.8	4.1	9.0	14.2	18.3	21.8	24.9	24.4	20.3	14.7	9.5	4.9
	Rainfall (mm)	20.9	34.0	80.0	137.0	223.0	236.2	224.6	185.6	152.7	135.0	62.2	34.7
Laifeng	Temperature (°C)	4.4	5.9	10.7	16.0	20.0	23.8	26.7	26.2	22.6	16.8	11.5	6.4
	Rainfall (mm)	22.0	33.6	71.9	129.9	206.2	225.9	213.9	166.5	121.6	105.8	59.7	30.1
Enshi	Temperature (°C)	5.0	6.6	11.1	16.5	20.4	24.2	27.1	26.7	22.5	17.1	11.8	6.9
	Rainfall (mm)	25.4	37.9	73.4	122.6	192.7	210.9	221.7	167.8	172.8	115.2	65.9	33.1
Badong	Temperature (°C)	5.8	7.7	12.3	17.7	21.4	25.4	28.3	28.1	23.6	18.3	12.6	7.8
	Rainfall (mm)	13.2	22.6	57.3	95.4	157.7	166.1	179.4	143.3	138.9	81.0	43.1	19.6



Photo by Zhu Lincan

Before or after touring Wudangshan and western Hubei, there are a few other places well worth visiting in Hubei if one has the time.

Wuhan

Hubei's famous capital, with an overall population of nearly four million, is made up of three municipalities which sprawl along both sides of the River Yangtze: Wuchang on the east bank, Hankou and Hanyang on the west, the latter two separated by the River Hanshui.

Hankou is the main centre, with government offices, hotels, shopping, and the terminus for the Yangtze ferries. Since this used to be the foreign concession area, there are many historical European-style buildings to be seen. **Hanyang** is now primarily an industrial zone.

Wuchang, although it appears fairly modern, was established under the Han dynasty and is home to some of Hubei's most ancient relics in the **Hubei Provincial Museum**. The very fine collection centres on finds from the tomb of Marquis Yi of the State of Zeng of the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) excavated at Suixian in northern Hubei in 1978. The nobleman was buried with more than 7,000 artefacts including bronze ritual vessels, weapons, chariot trappings, lacquerware (see box), gold, jade, and marvellous musical instruments including the now world-famous 64-piece set of bronze chime bells and others of bronze and lacquer. Not far from the museum is the **Donghu (East Lake) Scenic Area**, with parklands extending for about ninety square kilometres.

From Wuhan one can take ferries and cruises along the Yangtze to points west as far as Chongqing in Sichuan (a five-day trip) and points east as far as Shanghai (about two days). The city is also on the main Beijing-Guangzhou railway line.

Shennongjia Forest Region

The Shennongjia Linqu (Forest Region) in western Hubei covers over 3,200 square

kilometres of the Shennongjia Mountains. Part of the region has been set aside as a nature reserve to protect the virgin forests. 'Shennongjia Linqu' is also the name of the county town, sometimes referred to as Songbo. The mountains lie at the crossover point between subtropical and temperate zones at an average height of one thousand metres above sea-level. Six of the peaks rise to over three thousand metres, including the 3,053-metre Mount Shennongjia.

The rich fauna and flora include over 2,000 species of plants such as the 'living fossil' dove tree (*Davidia involucrata*), ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*), dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), Chinese tulip tree (*Liriodendron*), and 500 species of animals including the rare golden monkey, clouded leopard, giant salamander, etc. The forest region is also known for its more than twenty white species: bear, wolf, musk deer, muntjac, serow (goat-antelope), river deer, squirrel, snake ... even white spiders. It is not yet clear whether these are albinos or the product of environmental influences.

The mountains also harbour a large quantity of medicinal herbs. It is said that Shennong, the legendary founder of agriculture and traditional medicine, experimented widely with herbs he found on the slopes and applied them with successful results. Once, in order to reach a rare herb growing high up on a cliff, Shennong made a scaffolding (*jia*) of tall trees, and this is how the mountains got their name.

Permits are required to enter the nature reserve. Information can be obtained from the Shennongjia Forest Region Travel Bureau in the county town. The best time for a visit is the spring — May and June. July and August fall into the rainy season, when roads are muddy and access is difficult. October and November, when the lower areas are still quite mild, are also suitable months before the cold, wet winter sets in.

Jiangling

Situated on the middle reaches of the Yangtze about 230 kilometres west of Wuhan, Jiangling (ancient name Jingzhou) was known as a port for government vessels as early as the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.), when it was the capital of the State of Zeng (sometimes known as Chu). It had immense strategic importance. It still has its **ancient walls** with a circumference of nine kilometres. Originally built in 1187 during the Southern Song, they were badly damaged during the many battles in the town's history and were rebuilt in 1646 in the early Qing dynasty.

Near the Western Gate is the **Jingzhou Museum** (see box) which among other relics displays a sword of the Emperor of Yue of the Spring and Autumn Period and a well-preserved male corpse from the Western Han dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D. 24).

Gezhouba Dam

Upstream from Jiangling and about five kilometres west of Yichang is the Yangtze's largest water conservancy project. Nearly 2,600 metres long and seventy metres high, the dam — China's largest — sprawls across the river like a huge dragon, forcing all shipping to pass through one of the three locks.

The Three Gorges

Cruises along the Yangtze take in the famous Three Gorges over a distance of about 193 kilometres between Fengjie in Sichuan and Yichang in Hubei. If we consider them in the upstream direction, **Xiling Gorge**, at 76 kilometres the longest and the most dangerous, known for its raging rapids, stretches between Yichang and Xiangxi. Next comes the 40-kilometre-long **Wuxia (Witches Gorge)**, flanked by sheer cliffs, between Badong and Wushan just over the border in Sichuan. Last, entirely in Sichuan, is the magnificent eight-kilometre-long **Qutang Gorge**, only 150 metres across at its widest, between Daixi and Fengjie.

Lacquerware Finds in Hubei

Both the Hubei Provincial Museum in Wuhan and the Jingzhou Museum in Jiangling have impressive displays of lacquerware from the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) and the Qin (221-207 B.C.) and Western Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 24) dynasties.

Work from the first period is represented by a large number of finds from the State of Zeng (often termed Chu) in a variety of beautiful designs. Exquisitely made, these include items of practical, everyday use such as boxes and containers, furniture, musical instruments, tools, weapons and articles for horses and chariots, as well as funerary and more purely decorative objects. At that time the lacquer was applied to a thick wooden mould or 'body', but there is also a very small number of lacquerwares on a thin fabric body and on bamboo.

During the Qin dynasty, with improvements in techniques, more lacquerware on a thin wooden body appeared. The range of everyday objects also increased. Very often the article was marked with the name of its maker.

The last of the three periods, the Western Han, was significant for the development of Chinese lacquerware. Both the body and the techniques were now much more advanced: bodies were mainly of thin wood and fabric, and the lacquerware and the patterns used showed a much greater degree of sophistication.

1 Sika deer, 86.3 cm high, Warring States Period
(Photo by Pan Bingyuan)

2 Mandarin duck dou (covered food container), Warring States period
(Photo by Jin Ling)

3 Container with interlaced snakes design, Warring States Period
(Photo by Jin Ling)

4 Flask, Western Han
(Photo by Jin Ling)



1



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Forbidden City — New Restricted Entrance

As a direct result of its overwhelming interest for both domestic and foreign visitors, the Forbidden City in the Chinese capital is deteriorating slowly but inexorably.

An average of 20,000 people a day visit the massive complex of imperial buildings and gardens, once the residence of the emperors of China, now the Palace Museum. The figure doubles during the summer months, the peak season. Apparently, on National Day this year, almost 100,000 tourists passed through the great gates.

The authorities have now decided that things cannot continue as they are. With effect from January 1 1989, no more than 25,000 tickets will be sold each day. Of these, 15,000 will be reserved for domestic visitors, the rest for overseas visitors. An increase in the admission fee is also under consideration.

Another important point to note is that entrance to the complex will in future be possible only through the south-facing Wu-men Gate, that is, the entrance at the northern end of Tian'anmen Square.

Beijing Temple Fair Returns

Re-started recently, but then suspended again owing to restoration work, the Temple Fair at Ditan (Temple of Earth) Park in northeastern Beijing will be staged in 1989. It will run for thirteen days from January 30 over the Spring Festival (Lunar New Year). A great favourite with the people of Beijing as well as tourists, the fair will emphasize traditional aspects while providing fun and entertainment for all the family.

Another Great Wall Section to Open Soon

Tourists visiting the Great Wall from Beijing will soon have another choice of destination. Simatai in Miyun County will be the third section in the vicinity of the Chinese capital to be opened to the general public after restoration work costing more than one million yuan. Located 140 kilometres northeast of Beijing, this 800-metre section is topographically very different from the existing viewing points at Badaling and Mutianyu, with many more defensive installations. Ming-dynasty (1368-1644) armaments will also be on display there.

Qigong Goes International

A Sino-United States joint venture set up in Beijing aims to introduce aspects of traditional Chinese culture to the world. *Qigong* is a form of breathing exercises currently undergoing a dynamic resurrection in China. The Beijing International *Qigong* Service Company Limited will concentrate on staging *qigong* performances overseas, providing services and training, and setting up related publishing and video-recording businesses.

Chinese Banks to Issue BankAmerica TCs

BankAmerica Worldmoney travellers cheques, accepted in more than 160 countries worldwide, will be issued to both Chinese citizens and foreigners by two Chinese banks from next year.

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China has a network of 24,000 branches and offices, while the Agricultural Bank of China serves the rural financial sector at over 37,000 locations in China. The Industrial and Commercial Bank plans to sell the travellers cheques in just eight major Chinese cities — Beijing, Dalian, Guangzhou, Qingdao, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Xiamen and Zhuhai — to start with, but the service will gradually be extended.

New Beijing Shopping Centre

A new shopping complex located in central Beijing north of the Beijing Hotel should prove of interest to tourists as well as local residents. The Hualong (Chinese Dragon) Catering and Shopping Centre consists of five green-tiled buildings in traditional style laid out in the shape of a dragon, and covers an area of over 39,000 square metres. It is intended eventually to link the complex with the capital's main shopping street — Wangfujing Street.

The Hualong Centre has fourteen restaurants offering Chinese, Western (including Kentucky Fried Chicken), Korean and Japanese food in addition to snack bars, cafés, dance halls and teahouses. There are six large department stores as well as other shops selling local produce from different areas of China, and a foreign exchange counter.

Dragonair Adds Shanghai

Dragonair has finally been granted approval by the authorities to operate charter flights from Hong Kong to Shanghai as from December 12 1988. Its Boeing 737s will leave Hong Kong Mondays and Fridays at 12:30 pm, arriving in Shanghai at 2:30 pm. The return flight will depart Shanghai at 3:35 pm, arriving at Kai Tak at 6 pm.

Dragonair currently flies regularly from its Hong Kong base to Nanjing, Hangzhou, Tianjin, Dalian, Xiamen, Guilin, Kunming and Haikou. From October this year it has also been operating charter flights to Beijing on a month-by-month basis.

More Jiuzhaigou Improvements

A new hotel in Tibetan style has recently been opened in Baihe, a township three kilometres from Jiuzhaigou in north-western Sichuan. In an effort to improve communications in this remote area, the local authorities also recently constructed the 54-kilometre Nuori Highway.

One for the Coffee-Table

A book of photographic studies entitled *Leong Ka Tai on China: One to Twenty-Four* was recently published to coincide with the photographer's one-man exhibition of the same name held in Hong Kong in December 1988. Taken over a number of journeys to the mainland, the photos mainly deal with the Huanghe (Yellow River), Sichuan, Tibet, Beijing and the Loess Plateau.

Delving into Hong Kong's Prehistory

Two Hong Kong archaeologists have unearthed evidence that Hong Kong was inhabited 6,000 to 7,000 years ago. A site at Tung Wan on Lantau Island yielded 300 stone implements which carbon testing has dated to the Neolithic period.

The Institute of Chinese Studies and the Hongkong Archaeological Society have since funded a more intensive dig in the same area. The major discovery is a creek believed to be man-made and similar to several creeks found in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, which are estimated to be 2,500 to 3,000 years old. More than 400 pieces of pottery and implements around 1,000 years old were also found.

Palaeolithic Finds in Hebei

Remains of an early Stone Age culture in northeastern Hebei Province may provide clues to how people lived 40,000 years ago.

Excavations in the village of Zhaocun in Qian'an County have revealed large numbers of animal fossils — horse, donkey, red deer, ox and rhinoceros — as well as around 1,000 flint and stone implements including microliths (chips flaked from a hard core), scrapers, pointed and chopping tools.

It is hoped that this discovery will tell scientists more about the geology, weather and climate, and fauna of northern China at that era.

GUIZHOU SPECIAL

In this still rarely visited multi-national province in China's southwest, the home of over twenty minorities, we will be concentrating on the rich cultural background of the Miao and Dong peoples:

- Masks Expressing the Spirit of *Nuo*
- Days in Guizhou — Miao and Dong Stockades in the Province's Southeast
- Miao Embroidery: Reflections of Life and Legend
- Complexities of Male Headgear
- The Guizhou Skirt Story

Plus:

- Submerged in the Charm of Spring (Zhejiang)
- Luoyang's Museum of Ancient Tombs (Henan)



Han Mausoleum Layout Revealed

Archaeologists in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi, have finally solved the puzzle of the layout of the Duling Mausoleum of Emperor Xuandi (reign dates 74-49 B.C.) of the Western Han. Excavations have shown that the mausoleum measured three kilometres from east to west and four kilometres from north to south, with a layout similar to that of the dynasty's capital, Chang'an.

The actual tomb was shaped like a pyramid, rising to twenty-nine metres, with a passage eight metres wide running on each side to the underground chambers. The architecture of the mausoleum was highly formal and included a sleeping courtyard, where sacrificial rites were held and where the emperor's garments and other ritual objects were preserved, and a temple courtyard. Although the emperor and his empress shared the tomb, they were found buried in separate graves.

Early Shanghai Settlers

Discoveries made this year have pushed back even further the date of settlement of the Shanghai area. Finds at a site at Fuquanshan in Qingpu County to the west of the greater Shanghai region which included wells, pottery shards, rice, fish-net weights, pigs' bones and pottery wheels have revealed that settlers fished, farmed and raised live-stock there as early as 5,000 B.C.

The Fuquanshan site has proved a major source of data. Since the late 1950s, archaeologists have unearthed nearly 1,000 cultural relics and 154 tombs dating from around 5,000 B.C. to the thirteenth century A.D. After earlier discoveries of jade artefacts of the Liangzhu Culture — which flourished in the Yangtse Valley 5,000 to 4,000 years ago — the present finds have been identified as belonging to the Majiabao Culture which began more than 7,000 years ago.

More Shaanxi Imperial Relics

Archaeological work continues apace in the rewarding areas around the sites of ancient capitals in the vicinity of Xi'an. The latest discovery concerns the ruins of a 2,000-year-old imperial palace in Lantian County believed to be one of the twelve royal palaces in the Shanglin Garden of the Western Han dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D. 24) said to have been located fifty kilometres southeast of Xi'an — as is Lantian.

With the clearing of about 3,000 square metres of ruins and the discovery of a small section of ancient roadway and the base of a granite wall, numerous artefacts were found. These included bricks and eave-tiles, some of which exhibited patterns such as rectangular spirals, trellis and tree-branch motifs new to local experts.

Still in Shaanxi, the foundations of a country mansion belonging to Emperor Shihuang of the Qin dynasty (221-207 B.C.)

have been discovered in the town of Weinan, sixty kilometres north-east of Xi'an. The ruins of two buildings stretch around 600 metres from west to east and 300 metres from north to south. Materials found here included hollow bricks bearing dragon and phoenix motifs thought to be peculiar to the Qin dynasty and identical to others found at the emperor's mausoleum.

On the basis of the historical data, experts believe that the Qin emperor built 270 palaces outside his capital of Xianyang, only ten of which have so far been located and identified.

Shanxi Fossil Museum

Chinese and American archaeologists have found fossils of twenty animal species which lived between one and seven million years ago in the Yushe Basin in central Shanxi Province. Yushe is also the site of China's first county fossil museum, which houses the 144 varieties of vertebrate fossils found so far.



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(a) the pictures? ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ not impressed
 (b) the text? ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ not impressed

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(a) _____ (b) _____

(c) _____ (d) _____

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